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A

FULL AND CORRECT

REPORT

OF

THE DEBATES

IN THE

House of Commons,

ON

THE CATHOLIC CLAIMS;

*On Thursday, Feb. 26th, Friday, Feb. 27th, Monday,
March 1, and Tuesday, March 2, 1813.*

TAKEN IN SHORT HAND, BY AN EMINENT REPORTER.

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DEBATES

ON THE

ROMAN CATHOLIC CLAIMS.

MR. ELLIOT moved, that the resolution of the House, during the last Session, pledging the House to take into consideration the state of his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects in Great Britain and Ireland, should be read. On its being read, the Hon. Member said, that he had taken the liberty of having that resolution read, as being the resolution of a House of Commons, chosen in the midst of a religious ferment, and which had refused, on many occasions, the consideration of the Catholic Claims; and that resolution was a record of the change of opinion of that House, after the experience of some years, and after the most elaborate discussion. To the sanction of this branch of the Legislature, in favour of conciliatory measures, as to this class of his Majesty's subjects, he had to add the opinions of the four greatest Statesmen of modern times—Mr. Pitt, Mr. Burke, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Windham;—in whatever else they might differ, upon that great question they were united. When he had last presented the petition of the same people—of the Roman Catholics of England,—he had entered into the peculiarity of the condition of the petitioners; and he should not now do his duty, unless he remarked upon it. In a part of his Majesty's dominions, in

Catholic Canada,—would he could say the same wise policy was pursued in the rest of his Majesty's dominions,—no differences as to civil rights prevailed, on account of religious opinions. In Ireland, the harmony of the people was disturbed at a time of peril that required our utmost efforts, our greatest exertions; but the English Catholics,—the old stock, distinguished as much by their talents as their birth, in cities, are not admissible to any of the offices in a corporation, are not admitted to degrees in the English Universities, are not admitted to the lowest civil offices, and although living in the midst of their tenantry, and anxious to afford them every assistance and protection, they cannot be made Magistrates; they cannot vote for a Member of Parliament. From rank in the army, except to a certain degree, that of a colonel, they are excluded. Out of England the Catholic may arrive at any rank; but on his return there, he is liable to the penalties of the law. In the Navy no restriction attaches; he may command the fleet off Cork: but if the English naval officer visits his native country, he is liable to the penalties of the law. To the law they are admissible, but cannot have the most subordinate situation in the profession. This system of penal laws had been called the venerable monument of our ancestors,—the talisman, to touch which would bring ruin on the constitution and the country. The late House of Commons thought it anomalous, and came to a conciliatory resolution. The Petitioners hoped, through that House, to be freed from all the pains and penalties under which they labour. The Petitioners were amongst the most illustrious names in the country: they professed a different faith; but they remained stedfast to the old faith; which faith was in a great measure retained by that House, cleared at the time of the Reformation of some corruptions: but it was to be remembered, that that faith was the faith of the persons, who, at Runnymede, established the liberty of this country, when a weak and tyrannical prince, aided by the Pope, was checked by a Roman Catholic nobility, headed by a Roman Catholic Bishop, ap-

pointed by the See of Rome. (*Hear, hear.*) It was the faith of the heroes who fought at Cressy and Poitiers;—it was the faith of those who in a great measure conquered the Spanish armada, and successfully resisted a Popish invasion, supported by a Popish Bull, to publish which there was only one man that could be found;—it was the faith of those who for a century and an half were admitted to seats in both Houses. (*Hear, hear.*) These were the persons who were seeking redress: he hoped there would not be any more records of their failures. It should be recollected, that when Corsica was in our power, it was allowed to be Catholic; that Canada, the only remnant of the dominion of England on the Continent of America, was Popish. It ought not to be forgotten, that England had in late times supported the See of Rome itself, against an ambitious enemy,—that England had now in its pay, not only foreign Catholic soldiers, but Catholic Generals—and England was now engaged in combating the cause of Catholic allies. He hoped this Parliament by granting the prayer of the petition would secure immortal honour to itself, and draw into the aid of England all the virtue and talents in it.

The Petition was then read, and ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. YORKE rose and stated, that the Hon. Member's speech might have been better reserved for the ensuing debate; however, as he had a Resolution of the House read, he, (Mr. Yorke,) would also put in his claim to have another document read, previous to the commencement of the debate, which was the 9th, 10th, and 11th Sections of the 1st of William and Mary, as well as certain parts of the Bill of Rights.

Mr. WILLIAM SMITH said, it was not his wish then to enter upon a debate, but he felt exceedingly sorry that the class of people to which he belonged, (the Dissenters) were not likely to have the assistance of the Right Hon. Gentleman, who spoke last, in advocating their cause that night, but he never would himself advocate the claims of the people of any reli-

gious persuasion, to a right in which all were not to participate, and of which he considered all improperly deprived.

The passages referred to by Mr. Yorke were then read, when

Mr. GRATTAN rose to move the consideration of the claims of the Roman Catholics, pursuant to the Resolution of the House of Commons of last Session; and in doing so, he certainly meant not to propose any thing incompatible with the clauses which the Right Hon. Gentleman opposite had moved to have read. Nay, so entirely convinced was he, that the provisions of that Act were perfectly consistent with the object which the Catholics had in view, that it was his intention to propose that they should form part of the preamble of the Bill, which he trusted would be introduced in favour of the Roman Catholics (*hear, hear, hear*); for he thought it a wise mode of proceeding, that the same law which removed the disabilities of which the Catholics complained, should confirm to the Protestants all the advantages of the Act of Settlement. It was wise, in his opinion, that the same law which restored liberty to the one description of our fellow-subjects might be accompanied with security to the other (*hear, hear*). He had no hesitation in stating the Petition which he was more peculiarly called upon to support, as the Petition of the Catholics of Ireland, or of the whole body of Irish Catholics. This was morally true; because it represented the sentiments of the Irish Catholics. The motion he intended to submit to the House was, that they should go into a Committee of the whole House, to consider the claims of the Catholics, with a view to conciliation and a final adjustment, pursuant to the resolution of the former Parliament, which had been that night read. It might, no doubt, be said, that a resolution of the late Parliament was not binding upon the present. He admitted, that strictly speaking, it was not binding on the present parliament; but he presumed, the gentlemen on the other side did not intend to cavil at this want of

formality; and in this confidence he had framed his motion. He had to lament, indeed, that there were now on their table, petitions against the claims of the Catholics; and it would be miserable affectation to deny, that they were very numerous and very respectable. He admitted, that they were both numerous and respectable, though he lamented that he was under the necessity of making that admission. Some of these petitions condemned the Catholics, and their claims, in a very virulent manner. He would not imitate that example; but, on the contrary, freely confess that many of the Protestant petitions were from the most respectable individuals. He differed widely from them in opinion, but he respected their persons; he trusted that they would not long continue in their present sentiments, but that they would applaud the measure of yielding to the just and reasonable claims of those who were embarked with them in one common cause,—who lived with them under the same constitution and laws,—who had the same battle to fight along with them—against the same common enemy,—for the same common country. (*Hear, hear, hear.*) He saw nothing in their geographical situation—he saw no reason from any of the relations by which they were connected with each other, why religious differences should, like a firebrand thrown among them, produce and foster perpetual heart-burnings and disunion,—deprive them both of their natural force, and endanger the integrity of the empire. He was the more induced to hope, that feeling so much to be deprecated would give way, from what had actually happened in 1792. The Protestants at that period petitioned, or rather resolved, against the Catholics with much more ardour than at present; and yet, in the next Session, more was granted to the Catholics than they at first asked. Their understandings had been enlarged by reflection, and a view of the exigencies of the times. They had changed their sentiments; and they had the honesty and candour to avow the change, and to act upon it. Their views of the subject had from the beginning been sincere, but mistaken.

To the manner in which these Protestant Petitions had been obtained in this country he had much to object. They were obtained at meetings of the Protestant inhabitants, called together by the Sheriff. This he thought highly objectionable, that a public officer should thus be calling the people together by sects, and thereby in some measure giving the sanction of public authority to religious animosity. (*Hear, hear.*) The object of these Petitioners was as little to be approved. It was to petition another country against the liberties of their own. (*Hear, hear.*) It was to inflict upon Ireland a perpetual exclusion from the right of free citizens,—to inflict upon that country a perpetual sentence of a destination to the condition of a foreign colony; and to impose upon this empire the perpetual necessity of being a divided country. Such was the obvious tendency of these petitions; 1st, to exclude the greater part of the people of Ireland from the rights of free citizens; 2d, to keep that country in the situation of a foreign colony; and 3d, to render Great Britain for ever a divided empire. Such was the nature of the petitions which were said, in some instances, to be passed by acclamation. What, then, were the reasons alledged for such proceedings? He had to collect these from the resolutions adopted at different meetings, and from different publications, some of them by persons of high rank in the church. First, it was objected, that the tone of the Catholics was too high. His answer to this was, that the House had nothing to do with that. They were not then called upon to consider whether the tone of some of the speeches in favour of the Catholics were high or low. They were not to examine, as Members of Parliament, whether Mr. A. or Mr. B. had used expressions which ought not to have been used, or made speeches which ought not to have been spoken; but whether such loose speeches and expressions ought justly to be ascribed to the whole Catholic body. Indeed, it was no part of their duty at present to discuss whether the Catholics had conducted their proceedings with proper temper. He

gave no opinion either one way or other. He would not enter at all into the question. The real question was, whether you could perceive in any of these proceedings, any proof of a want of allegiance in the great body of the Catholics. It was a question not of temper, but of allegiance. If the Protestant Petitioners could shew that there was any want of allegiance in the great body of the Catholics,—if they could prove that the Catholics were disaffected, then they would have a good reason for opposing their claims; but if they could not do this, then their petitions were unreasonable, and their object ought not to be granted. The House would recollect the resolution of thanks which they voted to the army which gained the battle of Salamanca, of which army the Catholics formed a large proportion. If, then, the loyalty of the Catholic body was admitted; they ought without delay to be restored to that liberty to which every loyal subject had a right by the common law of the land. The Protestant Petitioners objected to the Catholics that they requested political power; but he could not see any thing so offensive in this ambition, as to render it a valid reason for excluding the Catholics from their just privileges. The crime did not appear of sufficient magnitude to justify a sentence of perpetual exclusion against the Catholics. But the Catholics did not, strictly speaking, solicit political power; they only petitioned for political protection, and for power only as a necessary means for that protection. (*Hear, hear.*) They only requested that their persons and property should not be bound without their interposition—that they should not be taxed without their consent—that they should not be tried by partizans covenanted against them. This was what they wished for. They asked not for power but for liberty. They were anxious to be relieved from their civil incapacities. If that was ambition, then they were ambitious. Protection, and not power, was the object of their petitions; and ought this to be denied them? The fact was, that the Protestants petitioned for power while the Catholics only solicited protection. The Protestants desired the ascendancy of a sect, the

Catholics solicited the ascendancy of law. (*Hear, hear.*) This was the real distinction between the views and objects of the two classes of petitioners. The Protestants were desirous of ruling by the ascendancy of their sect, the Catholics required nothing more than that they should all be governed by law.

The next objection to the Catholic Petitioners was that they desired to make laws for the Protestant church. To this his answer was, that they did not desire to make laws for the Protestant church. They only wished, as he had before stated, that their persons and property should not be bound without their interposition, according to the rules of the constitution, that they should not be taxed without their consent, that they should not be tried by partizans or juries assembled by partizans. They were perfectly willing that the Protestant church should be governed by Protestants, and this would always be the case, as the majority of the Members of both Houses must be Protestant; and would make laws for the Protestant Church. But the Protestants were not satisfied with this. They wished to have the exclusive privilege of making laws for the Catholic Church, of binding the property of the Catholics without their consent, and to deprive the Catholics of the privileges of the constitution, though the Protestant established church was partly supported by the tithe arising from Catholic labour. But if none ought to be admitted to that House, and to make laws for the Church of England, except Members of the Church of England, the Scotch representatives ought to leave the House (*Hear*). But that House represented all Protestants of whatever denomination and description, and excluded none but the Catholics. The principle was not merely wrong, but it was fatal. It was precisely this, that they were to confine the liberty of the constitution entirely to members of a particular church. This was the principle of the Protestant petitions: while that of the Catholics was, that this liberty should be extended to all without distinction. The Catholics desired that the Parliament should be imperial in fact, as well as in name,—that it should represent all classes,—and that

it should not be a partizan. That House, though called the House of Commons, was not itself the third estate,—it represented the third estate, and stood in its place; but the commonality of the united kingdom, taken altogether, constituted the third estate; and of this estate, therefore, the Roman Catholics formed no inconsiderable proportion; and was it fitting that so large a proportion of the third estate should remain unrepresented? But the far greater proportion of the community was Protestant, and would necessarily always have a preponderating influence—a proper ascendancy, not by means of exclusion, but founded on numbers and property. This was an ascendancy, which in the nature of things, the Protestants ought to retain; and of that there was no desire to deprive them. That ascendancy would be more firmly secured by granting the Catholic claims, than by refusing them. Give the Catholics, then, their liberty, (he continued), maintain your own ascendancy, and fortify the crown and the empire. Your numbers and your wealth will secure your preponderance in Parliament and the State: and by admitting the Catholics to the privileges of fellow subjects, under the same constitution, give strength and security to the whole empire. Identify the Catholics with yourselves, by equal privileges, instead of keeping up odious distinctions by means of pains and penalties. This will form a better support both for Church and State, than all the laws of exclusion that can possibly be devised. The Protestant petitioners, he observed, appeared to think it highly dangerous to the State and to the church, that five or six persons, such as my Lord Fingal, should have seats in the legislative assemblies; but they seemed to be quite insensible to the danger of excluding four millions of Catholics from their just rights and privileges. Such exclusions must be always a source of weakness and division. He next adverted to those periods of Irish history, when they had been deprived of their liberties and trade, and afterwards got them back again by joining with the Catholics. By their opposition to the claims of the Catholics, they appeared to have lost all idea of the

liberties of their own country. The Right Hon. Gentleman, who had moved the reading of the clause in the Act of Settlement, appeared to imagine that the principles of Catholic exclusion had operated chiefly in the reign of King William. This was not correct, as to the reigns either of King William or Queen Anne. The exclusive principle was the mad idea of those times, when the Protestants were infuriated by the absurd and abominable falsehood of Titus Oates, and others, who found their account in inventing Popish plots. A mad fiction, therefore, was the original cause of the proscription: and this mad fiction they were now making the rule for regulating the liberties and condition of the subjects of the united kingdom. (*Hear, hear, hear.*)

If the state of toleration and civil rights in the Catholic part of the continent were looked at, it would be seen, in France there were no disqualifications on account of religious faith. The case of Hungary was peculiarly deserving of notice. One of the articles of an act of the Hungarian Diet of 1791, provided that without any new ordinances, all persons should have the free exercise of their religion, with the liberty of erecting churches, even with steeples and bells, as well as schools, churchyards, &c.; and that nobody should be hindered therein either by the king or any other landlord. So far for religious rights. Then came the civil. Article 12 stated that all public charges, offices and honours, great or small, should be entrusted to native Hungarians, without respect to the religion they professed. See, then, what a Popish Diet could do, though when compared with a British Protestant Parliament, it could hardly be supposed that they had any good idea of toleration. Look also at the cases of Prussia and of Russia. The fact was, that they did not tolerate to the same extent as Catholic Governments actually did. Catholic Governments bestowed not only religious liberties, but civil qualifications, and the Church agreed to them. This was done by Catholic Governments, but not as Church Governments. We, however, granted toleration, but granted it with pains and

penalties: We did not merely deprive Catholics of civil franchises, but also of eligibility: and our Church actually petitioned, that the disqualifications laid upon them should be perpetual. The whole question was, not what were the dogmas and the canons, but what were the principles and the temper of the body, and what was the character of the proceedings of the petitioners. The counter petitioners seemed totally ignorant of the facts on which they rested their petitions. The clergy and corporations asserted, that the Catholics were just the same as in the worst of times—in periods of massacre and horror. This they stated, after witnessing the demolition of the Vatican, the prostration of the Holy Inquisition, the downfall of the Pope, who fell without any Catholic to help him; and after toleration had become common to almost every great country in Europe excepting England. They proved their charges true in argument, founded on their premises, though false in fact; and they brought quotations from certain writers to shew that the Fathers, and the existing Catholics, held precisely the same tenets. This was all founded on monstrous mistake, and monstrous misstatement. The Catholics had established their principles by oaths, which abjured every inimical principle imputed to them,—oaths framed by Protestants, and ordained by a Protestant Parliament,—oaths framed with a careful attention to all the *minutiae* on which objections could be raised,—oaths which the Catholics had taken, and still took; and by taking which they acquitted themselves of those bad principles which had been falsely imputed to them. They went farther, and denied that the charges we made were just, in identifying them in all cases with their ancestors; but we took this as a condemnation of themselves, and instead of believing their oaths, charged upon them the retaining of all the obsolete notions of earlier periods of their Church. The church, it was true, was said to be always the same. So, indeed, it might be said, a true Christian was always the same; but that was not a case which included the criminal Christian; yet here we went contrary to observation of what had passed almost

over all Europe, and we said there had been no change. It was very hasty, and very imprudent, for any respectable set of men to say, that any considerable portion of our fellow-subjects were enemies to the Church. Why enemies to the Church, unless the Church were an enemy to them? See how that question stood: if the Catholic's rights and the Church's security be declared by the Church to be totally incompatible, was not the Church equally an enemy to the Catholic? How enemies to the Church? Was it in penance? Was it in absolution? Was it in extreme unction, that the enmity was to be discovered? Could he go into particulars, it would be found, that on this head, the anti-catholic petitioners stated nothing but that which would excite, not conviction, but scorn? Enemies, then to the State; enemies to the Government! How? What was meant by enemies upon principle? What did that House do, when they returned thanks to our armies for gaining battles? Did they mean to say, that the Catholic soldiers to whom they voted their thanks were very good soldiers in battle, but great enemies to the State? But why enemies? Let the petitions go to a Committee, and see whether these injurious allegations could be supported. It was said boldly, they were enemies to the State; and to support this, the decrees of the Councils of Lateran, Constance, and Tr  nt, would be brought forth. Very well: but he would produce against these proofs, the authority of a British Parliament, who, by the various thanks which it had voted, had shewn an opinion of their allegiance and practical loyalty; and not a theoretical, unfounded, and abominable suspicion. Enemies to liberty! What, was Magna Charta no proof of attachment to liberty? He would go to the Declaration of Rights, as a Parliamentary document; for that declaration, for the most part declared old laws, which formed the great body and force of British liberty. Who were the authors of these invaluable laws, but these enemies of Church and State? Why had we not gone farther at the Revolution, but because we thought our ancestors had been such friends to liberty, and had established such statute-securities, as their wisdom could not exceed? He should place these facts

drawn from Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights, against the injurious and calumnious imputations, that our Catholic fellow-subjects were the enemies of liberty. Yet the Catholics were charged with maintaining the doctrines and tenets which they absolutely denied, and positively foreswore -- certain decrees of those antiquated Councils. What was the amount of these charges? The principle of the Pope's deposing power, the regicidal principle, and the reward of perjury! As to the deposing power, and the regicidal power, such principles acted upon would constitute treason, yet even these were charges. There could be no doubt, that if they held such principles, they ought not to be admitted at all within the pale of constitutional privilege; but he defied those who made such charges, to support them by the practice of the Catholics, or by any other means, except by those fruitless, contemptible, and obsolete canons, which the Catholics had forsworn. (*Hear.*) When such a charge was made, he begged to recal the opinions delivered, at the request of our Government, by the Universities of Salamanca, Valladolid, Alcala, Paris, Louvaine, and Douay. Those authorities were appealed to as the best; and they all did not merely deny, but rejected with scorn, the imputations of the Pope's having a deposing power: and in the doctrine of keeping no faith with heretics, which seemed so abominable that they were almost ashamed to hear of it. What could be wished farther? He would give something from a book, which had been described as a means of keeping alive the bad prejudices of Catholics, and the duties of infidelity and murder. It was used by the students of Maynooth (*Tractatus de Ecclesia*); and of which it was said, that posterity was corrupted by this criminal elementary book. He should read one article as to the King-killing and deposing power. "Christ," it stated, "had not granted to St. Peter or his successors, or to the Church, any power over the temporal concerns of Kings, consequently they could not either directly or indirectly be dethroned: nor could the allegiance and fidelity of subjects be dissolved by any power of the Pope, the Church, or its Ministers."

It proceeded to state, that it was worthy of remark, that no Pope who deposed Princes had ever defined that power: and that the examples of the illustrious Pontiffs of the early ages were opposed to such a doctrine, since they always enjoined obedience to the laws of the Emperors. Another book he would refer to, which had also been much misrepresented,—the Catholic Prayer-book as used in Ireland. It stated, that no General Council, much less a Consistory, could depose a King; and that subjects were not bound by such a decree; that the King of England's subjects renounced by their oath such a doctrine, on all grounds, as repugnant to the fundamental laws of society, injurious to the sovereign power, and destructive of the ends of Government. It said, they believed the Bishop of Rome to be the Head of the Church; the Church being an universal body under one head; but that he was not infallible, as separated from the Church; nor did Catholics believe him to have authority over the temporal affairs of Princes and States, directly or indirectly. If he absolved, or dispensed with, allegiance in charges of heresy or schism, the Act would be vain and null; and all Catholics would be bound in conscience, notwithstanding, to defend the King and country, as much as any Protestant—even against the Pope himself, should he invade the kingdom. (*Hear.*) As for the problematical disputes on the subject, it held they were not responsible; but with regard to the King-killing doctrine, it was expressly stated to be impious and execrable, and contrary to the laws of God and nature.

Another instrument to prove Catholic allegiance, was the oath taken by the Act of the 33d of the King, which swore due allegiance, and the defence of the Crown, person, and dignity of the King, against all attempts; to disclose all treasons or conspiracies; and to support the succession to the Crown as limited to the descendants of the Princess Sophia, being Protestants. They further swore, that they rejected and detested the notion, that it was lawful to depose or murder Princes, on pretence of their being heretics or infidels, and the impious principle of violating faith with heretics; and they denied all power of the Pope,

direct or indirect, in temporal authority. By the Act of the 33d, peculiar to Ireland, the Catholic swore that he adjured, condemned, and detested these doctrines as impious; and declared, before God, that no act, immoral and wicked in itself, could ever be excused by any pretext of its being good for the Church, or by any ecclesiastical power whatever. Absolution without the requisites for that rite, it was sworn, only occasioned an additional sin, by the violation of the ordinance. It was yet farther sworn by the Catholic, that he would adhere to the settlement of property in Ireland as it was by law established; he disclaimed all intention of subverting the Established Church, in order to substitute a Catholic Establishment; and swore, that he would exercise no privilege which he had, or might obtain, to disturb or weaken the Protestant religion and Protestant Government. What farther declarations or securities were requisite? The counter-petitioners might act and think with good intentions, but they supported them by very bad arguments. When they made such heavy charges, they ought to prove them. What if the printer of such foul charges against His Majesty's Catholic subjects were criminally prosecuted by my Lord Fingal, or any others of the Catholic Body? If so indicted, would he produce the obsolete canons in Court for his justification? Would my Lord Ellenborough suffer, or would my Lord Kenyon have suffered, the decrees of the Councils of Lateran, Trent, and Constance, to be put in as evidence against the Catholics? Would the defendant say, that he had no particular meaning against any individual, but was general in his charge against a whole Body? That would be to excuse himself by saying, that he had no antipathy against an individual; but that he meant his charges against four millions of his fellow subjects. The charges against Catholics implied not only a political dereliction, but a moral turpitude: which, if true, rendered them quite incapable of the duties of society, and of all those necessary and plastic principles which held the community together. They made the Catholics not men, but monsters. It was impossible to suppose

persons believed in such charges, but they made them to exclude others from all power. The Clergy of this Country, no doubt, understood religion perfectly ; but there appeared a mighty difference in their opinions and language when they prayed, from what they used when they petitioned. In prayer they addressed the Deity as the universal God, who sent his Son into the world to spread his divine revelation, and to save mankind ; but when they petitioned, their sentiments appeared reversed : they seemed to think that the Deity had almost abandoned his revelation, and that professed Christians throughout the greater part of Europe were worse than any other people on the Globe, and were actually monsters : that the Deity had been almost driven out of Europe, except where he had been saved by the Dutch and a few others on the Continent, and by the Colleges and Corporations who petitioned, through the intervention of certain guards and barriers ; and these securities were, in fact, nothing else than laws, by which such petitioners confined, and would perpetuate all powers and all profits to themselves (*Hear*). This was nothing, in truth, but a question for exclusive power and place. The God of Prayer was a different being from the God of Petition ; if the ascriptions of the prayers were true, he must maintain that the assertions in the petitions were false. He begged to be understood that he professed a great respect for many of the petitioners, but he must take some liberty with their arguments ; he could not feel disrespect for them, since he hoped that at no distant period their scruples would be overcome, and that he should see them all united with their fellow subjects and fellow-christians, in the common interests and cause of their common country. (*Hear.*) He thought it necessary that an end should be put to this question, for the spirit of the proposition against the Catholic went to exclude for ever a great portion of the community from civil franchises, under the imputation of their being, from their creed, traitors and murderers. The accusations founded on the old canons amounted to nothing less. Thus were

they to exclude one-fifth of the population of the empire, by arguments such as these; and the different parties were to continue disputes till they scolded each other out of their political and civil connection. The charges might be repeated, till some believed them; and the other party believed them to be made seriously and sincerely. It was the great duty of Parliament to examine and see whether we had not at present the elements of concord. Removal of disqualifications was asked for, and great numbers of Irish Protestants of rank and property joined in the request. It was said, that the Catholics insisted on having what they desired without conditions. Suppose it were so, that was no argument why Parliament was not to legislate, to make an Act, and to provide the modifications that seemed adviseable. The honest interpretation of what the Catholic said was, that he saw no necessity for additional security, he having given already all that was in his power. The Synod had said, they had no indisposition whatever to every reconciling step; they would do any thing necessary, that did not trench upon their Church. The Catholic was not against security, but against making his liberty a conditional grant. He said, "take any security you think necessary for your religion, if it does not derogate from our liberty, or impair our Church." The Church and the liberty of the Catholic, were perfectly compatible with our liberties; and the wisdom of Parliament should find out how to unite them. Many petitions from Ireland did not attack the principle, but suggested modifications of it; and this was perfectly fair in the Protestants. He could not believe that the Church of England was, as a body, inimical to the civil liberty and franchises of the Catholics; nor could he think that the people of England were so. He was sure that he might repose without fear on their good sense and integrity. Some had explained their object to be the security of their religion by exclusion. He did not condemn their object, but hated the means. They were not right in telling Parliament that religion was to be saved by denying civil rights. He wished to gratify all parties

in the security of their religions. He wished to root these principles in the very foundation of the island. Some petitioners said, "you must save the Church by a monopoly of all power to Protestants." He would secure the Church by the same means as the state must be secured—by the identification of the people with the constitution. He would gratify the Catholic by repealing the excluding laws, and thereby qualifying him. Repealing these laws, he would bring in a bill to take care of the permanent interests of all Colleges, Hospitals, and Ecclesiastical Courts; and then such other provisions as might be considered necessary might be provided by the wisdom of Parliament; only they should not go so far as to condition the liberty, (which would be disgracing the very gift,) or to affect the religion of the Catholic, or the integrity of his Church. He would have the preamble of the Act so framed as to govern both ministers and people in both countries. He would set forth the absolute necessity of the measure; he would make the act a covenant of concord, to put an end to all national and all religious animosities. The two sects, and the two nations, had been too long in a state of political and religious hostility. The liberty of the Press should be left in the exercise of perfect freedom, except it were to prevent subjects of different religions from abusing one another out of their common allegiance. (*Hear.*) There were subjects enough: there were the French, and Dutch, and other foreign people; and at home there were the Ministers; and when they did not furnish matter enough for attack, why then there was the Opposition. (*a laugh.*) "You cannot too soon put an end to your religious disputes and animosities. If you advert to your geographical situation,—to the spirit of your Constitution,—to your union under one Sovereign—you will see that you can have but one interest. You are, and should be, but one people; but united as you are in the most important interests, this outcry of religion is heard, while the voice of nature is dropped. Put an end speedily to this abominable contest."

His first step would be to move for a Committee pursuant to the resolution of last year. If asked by any Honourable Member what he would then do, he would tell him: he should, therefore, read a resolution which in a Committee he intended to propose. The resolution read by Mr. Grattan was in substance, "that, with a view to such an adjustment as would be conducive to the strength and security of the Established Church, and to the peace and concord of all his Majesty's subjects, it was highly desirable to remove the disqualifications affecting his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects; preserving safe and unaltered the Protestant succession according to the Act of settlement, and maintaining the Protestant Established Church of England and Ireland, as by law established and the Kirk of Scotland." After moving that the resolution of last Session be read, which was done, he moved for the going into a Committee.

Mr. TOMLINE, in a maiden speech, opposed the motion at considerable length. He adverted to the interest which the people at large took in the question now before them; and thought that the House would best command the respect of the country by engaging in the discussion without rancour or animosity, while they shewed themselves prepared to resist the Claims of the Catholics with uncompromising firmness. The name of Mr. Pitt, one of the greatest Ministers this country ever enjoyed, had been mentioned that night, and on various occasions, as friendly to farther concessions to the Catholics. It was, indeed, generally understood, that Mr. Pitt left office in 1800, because he could not effect some measure of this sort; but he never made any declaration of his precise intention. He even took office under the express understanding, not again to agitate the question. Was it not likely, then, that he changed his opinion, as to the practicability of the attempt? Would any man, he would ask, pronounce that measure indispensable to the welfare of the country, which that great Minister, Mr. Pitt, not only would not bring forward, but the discussion of which he even opposed? At any rate, the advocates of an unconditional repeal

of all the laws affecting the Catholics, could not number Mr. Pitt among their friends. But setting aside every argument deduced from the mere authority of names, the expediency or inexpediency of the measure was the principal consideration. Here the Hon. Member adverted to the existing situation of the Irish Catholics. It had been represented by some Gentlemen, as a state of slavery and oppression amidst universal surrounding freedom. Nothing could be more unfounded than such a statement. Had they not the same Constitution,—were they not governed by the same impartial laws, as their fellow subjects? Were they not protected in the exercise of their religion, and all the forms of their hierarchy? Nay, was not even a College for the education of their Clergy maintained at the expense of the public? Had they not been admitted to the full exercise of the elective franchise? Where were the grievances under which they laboured? He would maintain, that, if the majority of any State determined that public offices should be exercised only by persons possessing certain qualifications, the minority had no right to complain. The Hon. Member proceeded to declare his disbelief, that acceding to the claims of the Catholics would produce harmony and concord. “Their principles,” he observed, “were favourable to despotism,—our’s to civil and religious liberty: our’s was the trial by Jury,—their’s was the process of the Inquisition; and the most solemn assurances had been given by the highest persons in their Church, that it’s principles were unchanged and unchangeable.” Would it be wise to risk so much for the benefit of a few? Had that House, composed solely of Protestants, been found wanting for any of the objects of wise legislation? Had we been ever at a loss for wise and able Commanders, either in our Army or Navy? The Hon. Member next commented on the state of parties in Ireland. The cry of catholic emancipation had been made the means of discord and discussion, but the triumph of Popery was the ultimate object of those who raised it. The events of the last forty years in Ireland

had shewn that no indulgence had been met by gratitude, or had produced acquiescence. On the contrary, every new indulgence had only excited a wish, and encouraged a demand for more. (*Hear, hear, from the opposite side.*) The Protestants of England were not unsolicitous about this great question, and thought it full time to make a stand. They looked with confidence to the wisdom of that House for the maintenance of the safeguards of the Church and State.

Sir R. HERON rose, for the purpose of shortly avowing the opinion which he conscientiously held on this important question. The Honourable Gentleman had told the friends of this motion, that they must not avail themselves of the respected authority of Mr. Pitt, on behalf of the Catholic Claims; yet he had acknowledged, that Mr. Pitt, in one instance, relinquished office, because it was not in his power to procure for the Catholics those rights which, in his opinion, the interests of the country required. The Hon. Gentleman supposed, however, that Mr. Pitt had afterwards altered his mind on the question; but the supposition was altogether gratuitous, and in itself extremely improbable. The House had also been told, that it was dangerous to admit the Catholics to all the privileges of the Constitution, because they were hostile to rational liberty, and friendly to despotism. This strange accusation had been well rebutted by the Right Hon. Gentleman, who reminded the House, that it was to Catholic ancestors they were indebted for the Charter wrested from the tyrant at Runnymede. It was true, they were in general unfriendly to the Revolution; but the great body of the people at that time, of all religions, were strongly attached to hereditary succession; and had it not been for the efforts of a few patriotic Nobles, and the pusillanimity of James himself, the tide of public feeling might have turned, and the Prince of Orange been glad to have returned to Holland the best way he could. - The main fear which actuated the people at that period, was the danger of the Protestant religion; and it was natural for the Catholics to feel

attachment to James, because he risked and lost his Crown on account of their faith. If we looked to former times, it would hardly be said, that Queen Elizabeth, the glorious Queen Bess (*a laugh*), who established the Reformation,—was very favourable to liberty. In our own times we had seen two extraordinary instances of Protestant kingdoms, which either from treason or pusillanimity had submitted to foreign despotism while Catholic countries had resisted the invader with energy. There was no ground, therefore, for the general charge which the House had this night heard. As to the late rebellion in Ireland, it was not a religious rebellion (*hear hear*); it originated in the quarrels of domestic parties. Did not every body know that the principal leaders and conductors in that rebellion were Protestants, not Catholics? (*hear, hear.*) Great efforts had been made to procure petitions against the Catholic Claims, and certainly with much success. The people were too apt to be imposed upon by a cry of “religion in danger.” The Pope had always been a cause of great alarm with them. Bereaved of his territory stripped of his power, degraded, and a prisoner, he was still to be represented as dangerous,—but then he was formidable only in the British dominions. (*hear.*) Such was the cowardice of our soldiers,—such the weakness of our navy,—that not even all their efforts would be sufficient to protect us from his alarming influence! (*hear, hear.*) The foolish impressions of danger from such a quarter, were, however rapidly wearing off, though efforts had not been wanting to prevent it. “Numerous Anti-Catholic petitions had been presented to the House, but there had been a great deficiency in the most respectable of all,—he meant such as came from Free-holders assembled in county meetings. He was not aware that in England there had been more than five or six of this description, and some of them were not adverse to the Catholics. He had seen a paper against the Catholics, which purported to be the work of a Society, which took to itself the high-sounding title of the “Protestant Union.” It had reason to be proud of its Chairman; for the name of that Chairman (Mr. Granville

Sharp), was justly dear to all the friends of humanity. (*hear.*) Their declaration contained a variety of queries addressed to the Catholics of Ireland; but as it was published only on the 12th of February, he would put it to the house how very wisely these queries had been published, when the discussion must have come on in the House, before they could be answered by the Catholics. The declaration of this Protestant Union, promised a great deal; it offers the protection of their society to every part of the British empire, (*hear.*) They say they will always watch over the interests of Protestants, and furnish them with all the information in their power on the Catholic question. He had seen some of this promised information, in the shape of a pamphlet, which contained the gravest charges against the Catholics; and he could hardly believe that the Worthy Chairman, whom he greatly respected, could have been the instrument for propagating such atrocious calumnies. Those of the Clergy who were hostile to the Claims of the Catholics, had not been idle in disseminating alarms. Several of the Bishops, some of the dignified Clergy, Churchmen of all descriptions,—some with mitres on their heads, and some with mitres *in* their heads (*a laugh.*)—had been extremely anxious to procure signatures for Anti-Catholic petitions. Foremost in the holy warfare of pamphlets, stood a Right Reverend and Learned Prelate, for whose learning he entertained a high respect, and from whose earlier writings he had derived much instruction; but in the publication to which he alluded, if there was much learning, there was very little candour. He thought proper to ascribe the opinions of those who differed with him on the Catholic claims, to specious liberality, gross misrepresentation, or infidel indifference. Was any Prelate, he would ask, thus entitled to thunder out his anathemas against all who were not of his way of thinking? (*hear hear.*)—to ascribe to them the basest motives, and most criminal indifference? He (Sir R. H.) professed himself, by birth, by education, and conviction, a zealous Member of the Church of England; but he never would deny to any man the right of worshipping the Deity in the

mode most agreeable to his conscience, and that without subjecting him to any civil disability whatever. He trusted, that on this great question, the House would come to such a resolution as would restore permanent concord to Ireland.

Mr. BANKES said, that he felt desirous to take an early part in the present discussion. It was natural for the Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Grattan) to feel a peculiar anxiety to examine the nature and circumstances of all the petitions with which the table of the House was now loaded. For the House, it was perhaps sufficient to see that there were great differences of opinion upon the subject : and that the suggestion which was made last year, that in Ireland the Protestants and Catholics were nearly unanimous upon the point, was a suggestion which now appeared utterly unfounded in point of fact. The Petitions against the Catholic claims were numerous, and in many instances came from great and respectable bodies of men who were entitled to that respect with which the Right Hon. Gentleman had treated them. However he approved of the general tone and temper of the speech of the Right Hon. Gentleman, there were some expressions in it which he wished had been omitted. One of those expressions, with respect to the Irish petitions against the Catholic claims, was, that they were appealed to a foreign country against the liberty of their own. After the solemn Act of Union, was England to be considered as a foreign country by the inhabitants of Ireland? (Several Members called out across the House, that the words *foreign country* had not been used ; and the SPEAKER informed Mr. BANKES, that the words were, another country.) Even to this expression he objected : for who could the petitioners appeal to, but to that Legislature which was common to both countries, and belonged alike to both. There were other expressions, which he was sorry that the Right Hon. Gentleman had made use of. He appeared to him to have described, in an exaggerated manner, the privations and sufferings of the Roman Catholics, and to have entirely passed those bounds which he wished to maintain, when he reflected on

the jurisdiction of that country as a jurisdiction of parties and prejudices, and of Catholics being tried by juries summoned and put together by partizan sheriffs. This was a part of his speech in which the Right Honourable Gentleman appeared to him to deviate, in some degree, from that tone of good temper and moderation for which, as well as for their eloquence, his speeches had been so generally admired. He trusted that the inhabitants of Ireland, as well as this country, were subject to an equal law and an impartial judicature. He thought it was hard also, that in this country, where the general principles of toleration had been carried as far, or farther than in any other, it should be stated that toleration was dealt out in a niggardly and selfish manner. The Right Honourable Gentleman had, in his speech appeared to convey the idea that toleration was carried much farther in Catholic countries. This, as a general proposition, he must absolutely deny; it was denied by experience, by history, and by the knowledge of every gentleman present who had spent any time in Catholic countries. He certainly had shewn, that in Hungary there was a very great degree of toleration; but if he were to look at other Catholic countries,—if he were to look at the state of toleration in Italy, and particularly in the Papal territories, it would be found that the general proposition was not founded. If the Catholics of the present day were charged with maintaining the same opinions as their ancestors, who was there to blame? It was they who had stated that their doctrines were unchanged,—that they had not derogated from the faith and opinions of the Catholic Church in former ages. As to the question of toleration, we had no less authority than that of the Pope himself, delivered at no distant time. It was upon the ordinances of the French Government, issued nearly at the same time as the former *Concordat*. He complained that the French Government had assumed a latitude of indulgence with respect to every religious sect which he could by no means approve of. The liberty which the French Government pretended to give to every sect was contrary to the Canons and Councils of the Church, and to the

Christian Religion ; and therefore he rejected the proposition. His Holiness said, that the French system of indifference to all religions was utterly repugnant to the spirit of the Christian Religion, which could no more league with others than *Christ* with *Belial*. (*Hear, hear, from many Members.*) Did the Right Hon. Gentleman suppose that the opinion of the Pope, so publicly pronounced, would have no effect upon the Catholic prelates and ecclesiastical establishment of Ireland ? Did it require much ingenuity to answer his question why the Catholic Church should hate the Protestant, when the Pope had stated, that the Catholic Church could no more league with any other than *Christ* with *Belial* ! This was certainly some reason to believe that the Church of Rome considered every other Church as impious and heretical. When it was proposed then, either to go into a Committee to consider the situation of the Catholics, or to relieve the grievances which they complained of in any other way, he could not avoid considering what were the objects or the prospects of those who petitioned. He had on a former occasion opposed going into a Committee, because no specific plan had been pointed out. Now, if the Right Hon. Gentleman could shew, that the objects which he had mentioned in his resolution could be obtained, every body in that House must agree with him. The first object which he had stated, was to secure the peace and harmony of all classes in the empire, by uniting men of every religious persuasion in the common cause, and in one common interest. This was undoubtedly an object much to be desired. The second object which he had stated, was the preservation of the purity of the Protestant Church Establishment : and the third was, the general satisfaction and concord of all classes of persons throughout the country. Those were certainly most desirable objects, if they could be accomplished ; but from the great difference of opinion which had now appeared upon the subject, and from the great number of Protestant petitions against those claims, it did not appear very likely, that they could be granted with that general satisfaction and concord of all classes, which the

Right Honourable Gentleman himself felt to be so desirable. It had been pretty generally supposed, that as the subject had been so often stirred, without any counter-petitions from the Protestants of this country, that there was a great indifference among them upon the subject. He, at that time, wished that the question should be put off, in order that the sense of the people of this country should be known. He now rejoiced that they had come to the vote of the last session, because the consequences it produced were such, that it was now evident to every person who had attended the House last week, that there was a most considerable and extensive alarm through a numerous class of the people of this country. The manner, however, in which the Roman Catholics had conducted themselves at that time, made his Right Hon. Friend (Mr. Canning) come forward under very inauspicious circumstances in his motion of last year. The Catholic resolutions of the 18th of June, resolutions most angry and intemperate, were known in London only on the very day that his Right Honourable Friend had fixed upon for his motion. His Right Honourable Friend had, however, with all the ability of an accomplished orator converted those very inauspicious circumstances into an argument in favour of his motion. He had argued, that so long as Parliament should turn a deaf ear to the complaints of the Catholics, so long as that House should refuse to enquire into or listen to their grievances ; so long must they expect that they would feel goaded and irritated to such a degree, as to use language somewhat intemperate ; but that as soon as the House should shew a disposition to consider their case, the language and tone of the Catholics would be altered. Now, in what manner was that prophesy borne out by the fact ? The House did resolve to enquire into their claims, with a view to a satisfactory adjustment of them ; and yet, in the very next month, in July 1812, the Catholics published resolutions, announcing " their most serious apprehensions that a religious persecution was about to begin in Ireland." They also declared, that they would accept of nothing short of unqualified

concession of their Claims. So far from only seeking protection, it was power only which they wanted. They spoke of those things as their undoubted rights. (*Loud cries of hear, hear, from a part of the House.*) He was not sorry to hear those cheers, because he knew that there were many Members in that House who were ready to assert that they were their rights, (*hear, hear.*) How, was it to be said that in a State where we had a Protestant King and a Protestant Church, the Legislature was not at liberty to enact what laws it thought proper,—(*very loud cries of hear, hear,*)—he should finish his sentence, and again say, to enact what laws they thought proper for the preservation of their constitution in Church and State? Those Gentlemen, who had so loudly cheered, were little read, if they did not know, that it was an established maxim that every State possessed in itself the right of self-preservation. (*The cries of hear, hear, were repeated.*) If nothing less than what they called their civil and political rights would content them, he believed they spoke the sense of a very small part indeed of that House. He believed that even the Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Grattan) himself, was not prepared to accede to all their demands without some qualifications; and he was sure that his Right Hon. Friend (Mr. Canning) had not intended to concede them without many qualifications, and some which they would probably feel strongly. As for granting all their claims, without restrictions or limitations, he thought it was a thing which Parliament could not accede to, either now or at any future time. They now chose to say, that because they could not obtain certain offices, their civil rights were abridged; that because their civil rights were abridged, there was no toleration; and because there was no toleration, they were consequently exposed to religious persecution. If they chose to carry this farther, and say, that they ought to be, in all respects, upon an equality with the Protestants; this was a conclusion which he could never admit. As to the temper in which the Catholic claims were urged, the Right Honourable Gentleman had said, that it was our duty to legislate on a great scale, and

not mind the expressions made use of by the Catholics, as it belonged to Parliament and not to the Catholics to legislate. Now when the House were called upon to grant claims of such magnitude, and against which there were so many petitions, he thought the House ought at any rate to be assured, that the attending to those claims would be acceptable to the claimants. This, however, did not appear to be the case, for any thing short of absolute and unlimited concession was stated by them to be insult and indignity. It was evident that the measure was not popular in this country, and that the great mass of the people were not satisfied that the concession should be made. If, then, the measure was disagreeable in this country, and instead of tranquillizing Ireland, should be considered there as a mockery and insult, if accompanied with any limitations or restrictions, it would be a very strong ground for Parliament to hesitate seriously before they adopted measures highly disagreeable to the majority of the population of the Empire, and not likely to be satisfactory to the minority who urged the claims. He conceived that foreign influence, and the Catholic religion must be kept wholly distinct before the claims could possibly be acceded to. He thought that the correspondence of the Catholic Bishops with the see of Rome, ought to be put somewhat under the inspection of Government. As to the great name of Mr. Pitt, which had been mentioned on this occasion, he believed that it was well known by all his friends, that although he supported the measure as connected with the Union, he perceived the great difficulties of the question as it advanced, and had never matured a plan in his mind, for proposing those qualifications to the grant which he felt to be necessary. As to the proposition of stating in the preamble of a Bill, the rights of the Protestant Succession, and the Protestant Church, did the Right Honourable Gentleman suppose, that the House would tolerate the statement in an Act of Parliament now to be made, or that they would endure that it should be now formally enacted: that this country is subject to a Protestant King, and:

that a Protestant Church is by law established in it? Surely the House would never tolerate any such thing: and yet this was proposed to them by the Right Honourable Gentleman as a sort of security. He wished to know whether any Members really desired to propose the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, which had been so long considered the bulwarks of our constitution in Church and State? He considered he was now voting in strict conformity with the spirit of his former vote; and was glad that the vote of the last Session had given an opportunity of ascertaining the sense of the Protestants of the empire upon the question.

Mr. GRATAN, in explanation, said, that he had never used the word foreign country, as applied to England. He had said another country, which he conceived to be a true description, as they were distinct countries, although united in one empire. As to the expression of partizan Sheriffs, he had not used it by itself, nor intended to imply that Protestant Sheriffs were necessarily prejudiced against the Catholics. The way he had used the expression was, partizan Sheriffs covenanted against the Catholic Claims. He did not mean to cast an imputation on all Protestant Sheriffs, but merely to state the hardships of Catholics being tried by Juries assembled by those who might be fairly called partizan Sheriffs, covenanted against the Catholics. As for enacting any thing about the Protestant Succession or the Protestant Church, he never proposed any such thing. There was a great deal of difference between reciting it in the preamble of an Act, and professing to enact it.

Mr. PLUNKETT began by remarking, that the language of his Right Hon. Friend, the enlightened advocate of the Catholic Claims, ought to be exempt from verbal criticism. There was no man who united greater intelligence with greater zeal for the interests of the Catholics and of the Empire. His Right Hon. Friend had proposed a Committee, in which he intended to move resolutions, expressing a determination to abide by the Protestant Establishments in Church and State. This had been misrepresented, as if he

had talked of re-enacting the statutes passed at the Revolution. It should be recollected, that the most industrious arts had been used against the Catholics. It was gravely stated, that they had no object in view but to overturn the Church, and demolish the State ; and it was in answer to such calumnies that the declaratory resolutions of his friend had been framed. A complaint was made, that no specific intelligible plan was brought forward. The objection appeared to him to be without foundation. He could perfectly understand what was the object of his Right Hon. Friend. He desired that all disabilities should be removed ; at the same time offering an ample security for the safeguard of the Protestant interests. This he could comprehend ; but he could not so readily see what were the objects, and what the plans, of the Right Hon. Gentleman who spoke last. At one period of his speech he seemed to think that the claims of the Catholics must be at all times inadmissible ; though in another place he thought, as he did last Session, that something might be done in their favour. The foolish Concordat on which the Right Hon. Gentleman placed so much emphasis, was, he believed, promulgated before last Session, and therefore was as good a reason twelve months ago as it could be now (*Hear, hear.*) The speech, indeed, of the Right Hon. Gentleman appeared rather an answer, by anticipation, of some topics which were to be urged by another Right Hon. Gentleman who was to speak hereafter. (*A laugh.*) He agreed that what the Catholics sought might not with strictness be called a right ; yet he thought it a very metaphysical, and useless, and scholastic discussion, to investigate how far it was a right. Inasmuch as religious liberty was a right, their claim was a right ; and to withhold toleration, where no danger could ensue from the grant, was to deprive a man of one of his dearest rights. (*Hear, hear.*) The catalogue of grievances under which the Catholics laboured was large and provoking. It was galling to the soldier, actuated by the love of glory, to find himself unable to keep pace with his companions in arms : it was galling to the barrister of talents, to see

that he could reach no office of high importance in the State: and though the elective franchise had been granted, was it not a grievance to gentlemen to be excluded from the House of Commons? The motives which influenced persons to desire seats in that House were various: some of the noblest—some of an inferior kind; but whatever they were, they operated as powerfully on the minds of Catholics as they did on those of Protestants. The conduct of the Protestants had been marked with the greatest inconsistencies and solecisms: the Catholics had been by them admitted to wealth and knowledge, the great elements of political power: and yet the power itself was denied to them. It was made a question, whether rank and station, the proper appanage of wealth and knowledge, should not be separated from their necessary companions; and by an inversion in the order of civilization, an aristocracy is first made, and then it is to be lowered and kept down to the rank of a mob. For instance, Lord Fingal was excluded from a seat in the representation, and yet his menial servant might become a Member of Parliament. (*Hear, hear.*) And this inversion, this contradiction of the first principles of Government, was called the British Constitution: and the advocates of a contrary doctrine were branded as impertinent innovators. (*Hear, hear.*) Those men are called innovators and turbulent, who come humbly to the bar of the House, and bring with them the offer of their hearts and hands, their substance and their blood, towards the support of the constitution: and desire only to be allowed to bring also with them their honour and their religion, without which, they must be profligate and dangerous associates in any community. (*Hear, hear.*) Our ancestors had acted with more consistency—their plans were concerted with a sort of diabolical perfection, that the end might answer to the means. They steeped in the deepest ignorance, the wretches whom they meant to degrade and render incapable of power. We, on the contrary, have repealed all the penal laws which kept them in darkness, and yet still expect them to be the groveling slaves of stupidity. The time for such conduct

would have been, when these sons of earth were buried under the mountains which the mighty wisdom of our progenitors had heaped upon them. These had now been heaved off; and what madman was there, who would advise that they should be buried again under their heaps? What idiot, who could imagine that they could remain as they now were? (*Cries of hear.*)

Could it be supposed that partially opened, as the prospects of power had been to the Catholics, that they did not, from this very circumstance, feel with greater keenness the indignity of exclusion? It was said that they aspired to the highest dignities: to be sure they did,—they would be worthless hypocrites if they pretended otherwise. They aspired to the most exalted stations,—it would, indeed, be a most dangerous and fatal indifference, if four millions of persons, enjoying property and consideration, should be content merely with the substantial benefit of the laws, without a desire to partake the honours of the State. (*Hear, hear.*) Some of the inconsistencies of the opposite party he must again notice. A man may rise to professional eminence at the Bar, but to make him one of the King's Counsel would be pregnant with the severest danger: he may exercise the elective franchise, but to be a Representative in Parliament would be an event too dreadful to be mentioned: he may be an immense landed proprietor, but the law of the country would perish if he were allowed to be the head of the meanest Corporation in the meanest town on his estate: he may hold office in Ireland, where danger is chiefly to be apprehended from the abuse; but to clothe him with power in England would augur the downfall of the Constitution. (*Laugh, and hear, hear.*)

Securities were demanded: could there be stronger safeguards than the oaths of the Catholics? Perhaps it might be said, their oath was not to be depended on; and, in the absurdity of that feeling, some choice spirit might be induced to propose a more efficacious obligation; and no doubt some worthy Alderman would then bring forward his petition, signed by 60,000 subscribers: a matter easily effected.

by placarding the walls, and alarming the good citizens with the cry of the Church being in danger.

He would meet the question fairly. If the claims of the Catholics were inconsistent with the enactments of the Revolution; they ought to go for nothing: if they were compatible, let them be heard. If the former should appear, after full shewing, the petitioners must bow in silence: they must submit to their fate, and trust only to the inscrutable wisdom of Providence to work out for them the means of comfort and liberty: yet before the dreadful sentence is passed upon them,—before they retire, overwhelmed by the eternal interdiction, let the alleged danger be proved by facts and arguments clear as the light of Heaven. (*Hear, hear.*) But he felt confident that the case was not so; that there was no incompatibility between the sacred principles established at the Revolution, and the present views and requests of the Catholic Petitioners. He wished to fight this part of the subject inch by inch; mean time, let not the people of Ireland be outlawed on visionary surmises: let not the Government pretend to be frightened by the spell of its own raising. Such a pretence would be to palter with their own consciences, and to betray the best interests of the Empire. (*Hear, hear.*) Let some of the maxims of the Constitution, as established at the Revolution, be examined. The chief securities were the oath of Supremacy, and the declaration against Popery. It was not at the period of the Reformation that these safeguards were introduced, but towards the end of the reign of Charles the Second. It was then thought, that some practices were in agitation, contrary to the safety of the State; and the solemn renunciation, by oath, was then instituted. It was a matter of no great importance, whether the apprehensions entertained at that time were, or were not, well founded: for himself, he rather thought they were. Charles was a profligate monarch,—for so he must call a man who had sold his country for foreign gold, that he might act without the controul of a Parliament, and intended to introduce at once Popery and Slavery;—it was in consequence of such circumstances,

that those laws were adopted which had been since repealed, and other oaths had been substituted. If the Catholics are willing to take this oath, what excuse can there be for withholding them? It may be said, that it is not to be relied upon, and is dangerous to the Constitution; an argument whose absurdity is of this amount: as long as the Catholic adheres to his religion, he is not to be believed; but if he abjure that, his bare assertion becomes worthy of credit. Surely this is an absurdity worse than transubstantiation itself. (*A laugh.*) He did not feel inclined to deny that the power of the Pope may be considerable, and might have an improper influence: he now, and always thought, that this was a proper subject for strict and watchful regulation; yet the nature of this provision ought not to interfere with the merits of the general question. (*Hear.*) He thought that some plan might easily be devised; and surely the Right Hon. Gentleman must agree, that the Committee was the proper place for such propositions. It was asked, whether it was intended to repeal the Corporation and Test-laws? As to his own individual judgment, he would answer, most assuredly they ought to be repealed: and it seemed to him a burlesque on the Constitution to call those statutes its bulwarks. (*Hear, and a laugh.*) The Corporation Act, it was well known, was an ebullition of excessive loyalty at the time of the Restoration; and inculcated, among other salutary provisions, the necessity of passive obedience and non-resistance. At the Revolution, this Act had been purged and maimed; and yet this mutilated fragment of a statute was one of the props of the British Constitution. (*Hear, hear.*) Every body knew the history of the Test-Act. It was the child of Lord Shaftesbury, that unprincipled politician, who was utterly indifferent to all religions. It was not with a view to further the Protestant establishment, but to pique the Court, that he procured the passing of that act, in order to exclude James Duke of York from the succession. Thus one Statute was the effect of blind and overflowing—the other, of expiring and repentant loyalty. (*Hear.*)

As to the Bill of Rights, the exclusion of the Catholics formed no part of it, and the oath of supremacy was only incidentally introduced. At that time the Roman Catholics were not excluded from Parliament, nor from office. The few disabilities under which they laboured were promised to be removed; and yet in October 1791, after these promises had been held out to them, a Parliament was summoned in England, which excluded them from office and from honour: and this act of perfidy and injustice was embalmed as one of the most precious and revered ingredients of the English constitution.

It would be the height of injustice to suppose, that because the Parliament had at that time acted with such unexampled rigour and severity, that all future parliaments were bound to follow their example, and to keep up an undeserved exclusion of the Roman Catholics from the honours and blessings of that Government to which they were as warmly attached, and which they supported with as much loyalty and zeal as any other class of subjects within the empire. As well might it be said, that because this country had done an act of great injustice in seizing upon, and bringing forcibly away the Danish fleets, and placing them in safety in our own ports, that, therefore, it would for ever hereafter be impossible to restore them, notwithstanding that time, justice, and propriety, and many other concurrent circumstances, put it in our power to replace them in the hands of their original and rightful owners. It was no argument against the Catholics, that these points were not conceded at the time of the Revolution. The great men who were concerned in that glorious event, did not affect to change the principles of their ancestors. Having secured civil and religious liberty, they left things nearly as they were, trusting that future Parliaments would legislate for all the subjects of the realm with that justice and impartiality to which all good subjects are equally entitled. The time for so doing had, in his opinion, now arrived. We were at this moment fighting the battles of civil and reli-

gious liberty against a mighty and gigantic foe; and it behoved us to unite every description of our fellow subjects in one common bond of union, that their combined efforts might operate with the greatest effect in repelling those attacks which the enemy was aiming at us in every part in which we were vulnerable. At the time of the Revolution, King William was tied up completely; and it was not in his power to bring more than half his people against his common enemies; whereas we had now an opportunity of uniting heart and hand the whole mass of the population of the empire, and bringing them to bear with all their force and energy against the desperate assault of this formidable modern Colossus. Against such striking and important advantages as these, it was idle to be deterred or alarmed by such ridiculous clamours as those lately sent abroad, under the cry that the Church was in danger. For his own part he declared he had never yet been able to ascertain what was meant by the Church being in danger. He could only say with his Right Hon. Friend who brought forward the Motion, "How are the Catholics to overturn the Church while there is a Protestant Monarch and a Protestant Establishment?" It could only be done by two ways, viz. by force, or through the intervention of the Legislature. Was it to be done by force? The very idea was ridiculous. But supposing for a moment, by way of argument, that to be the case, this very measure would make them less able to do it. Was it then to be done in that House? Surely nothing could be more weak than such an idea. Suppose a majority of the Members from Ireland; nay, even admitting the whole of the one hundred returned by that part of the Empire, were all to be Roman Catholics, what could so small a number do against the whole of the Members of Great Britain, with a Protestant Executive, and a Protestant Church? Nothing could be more futile than such apprehensions. There never was a fairer opportunity to do a great act of justice, which could not but redound to the interest and honour of all who were concerned in

it. Would it be for the security of the Church, that this measure should be deferred till the establishment should become rocking and toppling? Two things were to be particularly attended to: the relative wealth and numbers of the Catholics, as compared with the Protestants. At present the Catholics were as inferior to the Protestants in point of property, as they were superior in numbers. In time it may so happen, that their wealth may increase in proportion to their numbers; and would it be politic to postpone the question till the Catholics become as important and weighty in the scale of wealth, as they are now superior in numbers? It was really extraordinary to hear the arguments which had been resorted to on this occasion—and astonishing to think they could be received in the way they were. The established religion of the country must be respected. Every thing was in its favour, and our civil and religious liberties are more firmly secured by their being mixed and blended together, and dependent on each other for support; and, therefore, the Protestant Church has nothing to dread, but may very safely rely on its own foundation, which is secured by a duration of upwards of 300 years. Such a test of its actual strength never could be shaken by the senseless and ridiculous cry of its being in danger. Yet, notwithstanding all he had heard of petitions from various bodies of the clergy, he did not believe that the great body of the Protestant Clergy had joined in the cry, though, as an Hon. Baronet had said, certain persons with something *on* their heads, or *in* their heads, might perhaps have done so. The Honourable Gentleman who spoke last had informed the House, that his opinion last year was in favour of the Catholics, but that he thought himself warranted in now having changed it, because he saw the people were universally against the measure. This was, in his opinion, by no means a fair argument, to use the cry of the English people against the Irish. At the time of the Union, the Irish had been flattered with promises that their claims would meet with greater facilities in consequence of that measure taking place, and that

they had thus been induced to give up their own Parliament. Had that not been the case, those claims would have come to be discussed before their own Parliament, where the cry of the English people against the measure could not have been made, nor if made, would it have been heard. He called upon the Noble Lord opposite (Lord Castlereagh), who if he could not be called a party to that act, had been at least a very principal instrument in bringing it about ; he called on him to say if that was not the case. At least he hoped that Noble Lord would not lend himself to this cry, now set up with so much clamour, and so much fury. He did not, however, believe that this was the real, genuine, sober, deliberate opinion of the people of England,—many arts and tricks had been used to make it appear so, but he believed those had imposed only on the very lowest orders, and this mighty cry had been set up principally by the mob. It was by no means his wish to see one part of the community ride over the interests of another part of the same community ; neither did he think that the lower orders of the people ought not to be attended to : but at the time the House was talking of the highest interests of the Constitution, he had certainly a right to say, that was not the moment to appeal to the mob for their opinion on a measure of important legislation. The Honourable Gentleman who spoke last, had also said, that the intemperance in the proceedings of the Catholic body in Ireland had tended greatly to make him change his opinion. He (Mr. Plunkett) confessed that he, as much as any man, disapproved of some publications which had been sent forth on this subject ; but he thought it did not consist either with candour or justice, to visit these on the Roman Catholics of Ireland ; nor was it fair to say, that even if they had been Catholics who issued them, that therefore the House should not attend to their petition, and to the motion which had been brought forward by his Right Honourable Friend in consequence of it. If these people demand what is unreasonable, Parliament is not therefore bound to grant what they demand. They may, how-

ever, take their claims into consideration, they may deliberate upon such of them as appear to be better founded than others : they may legislate for them. If the House agrees to go into a committee, they may propose and frame such securities, both for the constitution and establishment, as to them shall appear proper and necessary. They may separate the sound part of the Catholics from the unsound, and they may shew their wish to do impartial justice to every class of his Majesty's subjects. Many of those arguments which had given so much offence and alarm had been used by violent and wrong-headed men, without any authority from the Catholic Body. Many of them had, perhaps, been used by a disaffected party. He believed there was a disaffected party in Ireland, though, perhaps, they were only few in number ; yet he thought there were certain persons in Ireland who wished most cordially that the Catholic Question, or Catholic Claims, as they are alternately called, should never be carried, but left to engender and increase that discontent which they themselves had imbibed, and which they would be happy to see spread far and wide. It would be very hard, however, and very unjust to provoke the whole body of the Catholics merely to punish these few ; and it would be the very acme of injustice to refuse to attend to the claims of the reasonable Catholics, because some rash individuals had delivered their sentiments on the subject in a stile of intemperance and extravagance. He believed much mischief was to be attributed to the imprudent and impolitic conduct of the Governments of both countries ; one of which had irritated the people by attempting to prevent them from making their claims, whilst the other equally affected their feelings, by continually turning a deaf ear to all they had urged on the subject. A wise Government had a certain conduct to exercise. If they meant to refuse all concessions, they should say so at once : if, on the contrary, they intended to grant concessions, they ought to do it as soon as possible, as they then would come with a better grace, and be received with double

welcome. He was of opinion, that by acceding to the motion of his Right Hon. Friend, means might be found to put matters in such a train that the claims of the Catholics might be acceded to without any difficulty or danger. He, for his own part, had endeavoured to argue the question as a real and zealous friend, and well-wisher to the interests of the whole Empire; and if the House agreed to go into a Committee, he would be one who would do every thing in his power to give every possible security to the establishment.

Mr. YORKE rose and observed, that after the very able and eloquent speech which the House had just heard from the Right Hon. Gentleman, he should not pretend to follow him throughout the whole of his arguments, but would reply to some of the leading points. There were one or two expressions which escaped the Right Hon. Gentleman, which led him (Mr. Yorke) to believe that he was not aware of the dangers which might arise if the concessions now claimed were granted—that danger, the only one to be feared, was the interference of a foreign power over the Clergy. If the Right Hon. Gentleman could satisfy his mind on that point, then he would have no objection to go into the question. Mr. Y. proceeded to notice some misapprehension on the part of the Right Hon. Gent. as to the precise words which his Hon. Friend (Mr. Bankes) had used when speaking of the bulwarks. What he conceived his Honourable Friend meant was the bulwarks of the Church, and therefore he was not hostile to the interpretation which had been put upon that part of his speech. With respect to the question, it was not a question of toleration, as had been supposed: for when the Legislature permitted the free exercise of the Romish Religion to the Petitioners, that was toleration. Now, with respect to the disabling laws, nothing had been adduced to satisfy him that it was not necessary to keep them up. Until that was shewn, he for one could not consent to repeal them. It had been admitted by the Right Hon. Gentleman that the Constitution was

Protestant. If so, the Government must be Protestant also; for it could not be denied that it was a fundamental part of the Constitution. To talk of an introduction into the preamble of the Bill, of words recognizing that form was idle and nugatory. If, therefore, the establishment was Protestant, the *onus probandi* lay upon those who wished to alter that establishment. He did not mean to contend for everlasting exclusion: for if the friends of the Catholics would shew to him that the concessions could safely be granted, then he was prepared to vote for the Inquiry. When the Bill of 1791 was introduced into Parliament, that Bill was hailed by him as a relaxation of the laws against Catholics; why was that bill not carried through? On that occasion he was afraid the friends of the Catholics had reckoned without their host, and that, in truth, there was no communication had with the See of Rome; and yet at that time that very Pope was in alliance with England, and his territories were guarded by our ships. The questions at issue were, first, whether there was any danger from conceding the claims, and secondly, whether there was any from not conceding them. Now the influence of the Popish See over the claims was undoubted, and the influence of the clergy over the laity was so great, that under all circumstances it would not be prudent to relax. A great deal had been said about the tenets of the Church of Rome. He had been endeavouring to make out what these tenets were, but could not. Mr. Y. referred to a Bull published by the Pope in 1807, when he was carried from Rome, in which he excommunicated Bonaparte and all his adherents, for having attacked the Papal See. In reading some extracts from that and other documents, he contended that there was no direct evidence that the Clergy had or would take oaths of fidelity. The Pope with respect to these oaths states, "that the whole of this Protestant Kingdom was in a state of excommunication; that Roman Catholics had no hopes of salvation, if they disobeyed the order, nor could take oaths without manifest injury to the power of the Romish

Church ; that they must not take an unlimited oath of fidelity to such a Government." With such evidence before the House, could they consent to go into a Committee? The knowledge of those facts must preclude them from entertaining the question. The Right Honourable Gentleman contended that the danger of negotiating now, when the Pope was under the dominion of Bonaparte, was very great. It had been said by the Right Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Plunkett) " Would you be afraid of a Catholic party in Parliament? To that question he would reply by saying, that under certain circumstances he would not; but then as the Right Honourable Gentleman observed, wealth and power increased in a few years after the introduction, it is impossible to say what might not be done by a party. Suppose Ministers and the opposition were nearly balanced, the preponderance of a party such as that might turn the scale. If the Roman Catholics conceive their consequence is depreciated in the eyes of their fellow subjects, they had themselves only to blame, and must, therefore, take the consequences. If they chose to acknowledge a foreign supremacy, the fault was theirs; and they could not be considered in the same light as their fellow citizens. No man could serve two masters at one time. He could not divide his allegiance; he could not expect all the advantages which his Protestant fellow-subjects enjoyed. If the Roman Catholics of the Empire chose to bow their necks to miserable Italian Prelates, submitting to the slavery of Bonaparte, they brought down inconvenience upon themselves. Every thing had been done to detach them from Foreign alliance, with that view the College of Maynooth had been established. But until he had an assurance that they had shaken off a foreign yoke, he could not consent to go into a Committee.

Mr. J. SMYTH conceived it his duty, pursuant to the reason and spirit of the Resolution adopted by the last Parliament, to support the proposed measure of conciliation and adjustment with our Roman Catholic fellow subjects. He concurred most heartily in the

Motion of the Right Hon. Gentleman. He was apprized by the Petition from the University of Cambridge, which was not, however, the Petition of the majority of that body, that he differed from many most respectable persons. As far as the Petition expressed anxiety and interest in the security of the Constitution, both in Church and State, so far he completely coincided with it; but as far as it looked forward for that security to the continuance of restraints and penalties, there he must give his unqualified dissent. The history of this Country very clearly proves the Penal Laws originated not in religious but political feelings. Religion was looked upon merely as a presumptive criterion of politics, in those days, perhaps, not always likely to deceive. If then, those political sentiments have been radically changed, the penalties enacted against them should at the same time cease to exist, though religion had remained the same. It is openly contended, that those penal laws are part of the British Constitution: if so, every instance in which any portion of them was repealed, must be considered as an inroad upon the Constitution. He deprecated, at the same time, any imputation upon great and illustrious characters, with whom those laws had originated. They were acting under the pressure of a hard necessity. "*Res dura et regni novitas*" was the rule and motive of their conduct. It was, he said, a singular circumstance, that though no person at the present day would raise his voice against the right and expediency of mere toleration; whilst the opinion of the great Mr. Yorke, in former times, was directly against it. This delusion of a mind so enlightened and extensive as his, should inspire the present generation with modesty and diffidence in the consideration of the subject now before the House. Even Bishop Burnett, with his zeal for liberty and general toleration, was in favour of a Penal Statute, which armed the father against the son. Their policy was, however, at least consistent; they avowed and acted upon the principle of extirpation. But shall it be said that the Constitution, when ad-

vanced to the full growth of maturity and strength, requires the same fostering and jealous care as in its infancy? He feared that some persons regarded with superstitious veneration those relics, already described by the Right Hon. Gentleman near him, (Mr. Plunkett,) with the most splendid powers of eloquence and reason. Let it not be thought that we are defending the original fabric, when we are contending for the fragments that have fallen into decay. It will even sometimes happen, in the vicissitudes of human affairs, that what had been the support of one generation may be the bane of another. Why should we now attempt to withhold power from the Catholics, when we had already partly granted it, in granting them wealth, and recognizing their allegiance? He begged leave to trespass on the attention of the House, while he adverted to a supposition that greatly influenced the public mind without those walls, namely, that if these Claims were granted, Catholics would be admitted to legislate for Protestants: as well might it be supposed, that Protestant Dissenters legislated at this moment for the Established church. Catholics, so far from ever constituting a majority, could not possibly reach even the proportion of one sixth. Did the Protestant Establishment suffer any injury from the admittance into Parliament of Scotch Presbyterians? It was no inconsistency, as some persons supposed, that the Monarch should be Protestant while his servant was a Catholic. Should difference of religion induce the Emperor of Russia to discard Count Wittgenstein, or chain down his ambition and his talents to the command of Colonel, a Lieutenant, or an Ensign? Mr. Burke somewhere observes, that the Protestantism of the Sovereign was a principle of the Constitution, even before the Act for limiting the Crown, from his being the head of the Protestant Church. In that point therefore no security was requisite. To the theoretic or imputed doctrine of the Catholics he would not think it necessary to attend, when the principles upon which they acted, their uniform practical conduct, was altogether unobjectionable

the consideration of this question it was peculiarly necessary to divest ourselves of prejudices of every kind, and religious prejudices in this country were among the most inveterate. It was absurd to impute to the Catholics, as had been done, a surrender of the Constitution. He would not go over the ground splendidly illuminated, and indelibly marked by the footsteps of the Right Hon. Gentleman, (Mr. Plunkett,) and trusted, the House would not lose this opportunity of conciliating the affection of their Roman Catholic fellow-subjects. In differing from many of his Constituents, he was sustained by the authority of a learned and distinguished Dignitary of the Church, the late Archdeacon Paley, whose work on "Political Philosophy" was held in the highest estimation by the illustrious University which he (Mr. S.) had the honour to represent. Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt, though widely differing on other subjects, were agreed on this. The Hon. Member concluded with some remarks on the subject of the securities that might become matter of deliberation, if the House should think it expedient to go into a Committee.

Mr. COURTENAY said, he had listened this night with heartfelt pleasure to the sentiments delivered, and talents displayed by distinguished Irishmen. Of Ireland he should speak not with the partiality of a native, but the affection of a friend. He regretted that this subject had seldom been considered, on a practical view, or on principles of sound reasoning. He would judge of the Catholics by the temper and sentiment of the entire mass, not by any particular assemblies. The minds of many were alarmed by the influence of the Catholic Clergy over their flocks: this influence he admitted to a certain extent, but it proceeded, he said, from the peculiar destiny of the Irish peasant, whose condition, from local and other causes, is such, that the Catholic Priest is the adviser to whom he can resort.—The Hon. Member then referred to the Report of the Commission, enquire into the state of education, by

which it appeared, that the Catholics and Protestants were equally disposed to diffuse the benefits of education, and the peasantry as anxious to obtain them. The zeal of the Roman Catholic Clergy was very laudable in this respect. And all the circumstances together afforded the fairest prospect to the wisdom of Parliament. He was aware of his differing from some of his Constituents, but he spoke from personal and local knowledge, and from a deep conviction of the general utility of this measure to the whole Empire.

SECOND DAY.

Friday, February 26.

Sir JOHN COX HIPPISEY moved the Order of the Day, for resuming the debate on the subject of the Catholic Claims. The Order being read,

The Hon. Baronet assured the House, that he did not mean to trespass at any length on their attention; but many, he believed, would go along with him in the opinion, that it did not become him to give a silent vote on the present question. It was one which he had deeply studied, partly in order to repel the statements made by a Right Hon. Member on the other side, (perhaps Mr. Duigenan); and he had endeavoured to give the utmost currency to his opinions on the question, both here and out of the House. He besides felt himself called upon to-night to do an act of justice to the English Catholics, who certainly had been very much misrepresented. The Honorable Baronet (we regret that it was impossible to hear him distinctly) adverted to a certain charge against the Catholics, in answer to which he stated, that a solemn written abjuration of certain obnoxious principles which had been ascribed to them, had been signed by all the Catholics except five or six, and was depositer

in the British Museum. The Catholic Boards had declared their firm adherence to that abjuration. He next adverted to a certain oath, which the Catholics had, by the command of the Vicar Apostolical, refused to take; and stated, that in that refusal they were supported by the authorities of Lord Thurlow and Bishop Horsley. The refusal was merely owing to the introduction into the oath of some dogmata about the priesthood. The oath, however, after passing the Commons, was altered in the House of Lords, and harmony was restored on that subject, for the Catholics readily took the oath as amended. He was anxious to state this, because a *Morning Paper* teemed with extracts from publications adverse to the Catholics, and yet absolutely refused to receive an advertisement of a publication for the refutation of the misrepresentation. The paper, he loudly stated, was the *Morning Post*. He could not but think this a very improper use of the press. An accident had placed him in a situation where he had great facilities in collecting information on this subject; and every day's experience convinced him more and more, that the application to Parliament by the Catholics was proper. He then adverted to the great merits of the Catholics, as displayed in our fleets and armies, and to the great importance of Ireland, for many reasons, and also on account of the immense quantity of provisions exported (the quantity, in 1811, he stated at the value of eight millions) from that country to this country, for the use of our armies, fleets, &c. He was, therefore, friendly to concession,—but to concession accompanied with security—such a concession as Mr. Pitt contemplated. The *Edon. Baronet*, (if we understood him rightly,) therefore, insisted upon some control, in the Government, upon the power of the Pope in the appointment of Bishops; and said, that there was no other country in Europe, where a foreign power was allowed to interfere by Bulls or Briefs, or Missives, or in any other way, without the control and examination of the Government. This was a subject on which all Governments were jealous. It

was a fundamental principle, which even Buonaparte in the plenitude of his power, had not chosen to abandon; for the very first article in his *Concordat*, evinced his caution on this point. Having studied this question very deeply, he felt it his duty to speak upon it whenever it came under the discussion of Parliament. Whether the claims were now conceded or refused, he still thought that great good would be derived from the agitation of the question; and more particularly if the claims should be seriously taken into consideration. (The low tone in which the Hon. Baronet spoke, made it impossible to hear him distinctly from the gallery.)

Mr. YORKE spoke in explanation.

General MATHEW said, that after the very able and enlightened speech of his Right Hon. Friend (Mr. Grattan,) it appeared to him that there remained very little to be added, either by him or any other person. He thought that his speech was the best combined collection of historical facts that ever he had heard or read in any speech. No speech ever more fully proved the rights of the Catholics to emancipation; and none shewed more strongly the virtue, and good intentions of the person who had made it. He was sorry, however, that he was obliged to differ from his Right Honourable Friend on some few points. His Right Honourable Friend appeared to him not only to be a powerful advocate for Catholic emancipation, but to be equally desirous to give full security to the Protestant Church. (*Hear, hear.*) Now what those securities could be, he was never able to find out, nor to meet any body who could tell him. (*Laughter and cheering from the Ministerial benches.*) He was pretty certain, that his Right Honourable Friend (Mr. Grattan) had never, in his comprehensive mind, devised, or determined upon any thing which would be accepted as securities to the Protestant Church; nor could he ever find any person, either in Ireland, or in England, who could give him any kind of idea what sort of securities were wanted. He did not know how this bond of security was to be

drawn up, or in what words it was to be conceived. Were they to require securities from one portion of the Catholics, for the allegiance of the rest? He did not know what securities could be given, greater than the oaths they now take; and he thought that no honest man ought to require greater securities. If they were not bound by their oaths, neither would they hold themselves bound by any thing which could be invented as additional securities. If the Catholic would break his oath of allegiance, he would break any other oath. Something had been said about a provision which was formerly proposed to be given by the Government to the Catholic Clergy. The question was at that time much discussed; but the Catholic body finally agreed, that their Clergy should take no emoluments but from their own flock. The influence of the Government was already great with the Protestant Clergy; and if they had the management of the Catholic Clergy also, he saw nothing to prevent the Government from being an absolute despotism (*some laughter*). The Hon. Baronet (Sir John Cox Hoppisley) had agreed with his Right Hon. Friend in almost every thing but the *veto*, which he wanted, but which his Right Hon. Friend saw was quite impossible to be obtained. In fact, if the Catholics granted that, they would be giving up their religion. You might call them by whatever name you liked, but Catholics they would no longer be. Instead of Catholics, they should be called by some other name; *Veto-men*, he thought, would be as good as any other (*a laugh*). Conceiving this subject to be of immense importance to Ireland, he felt it his bounden duty, as an Irish Representative, to speak his sentiments upon it, and not content himself with giving it a silent vote. He should leave no stone unturned to secure the welfare and prosperity of his native country. He wished to see all the jealousies and animosities banished from the land, and a liberal, wise, and enlightened policy take their place. He thought that nothing was clearer than that every man should be allowed to make his peace with his God in

whatever way he thought proper, without being exposed to any worldly disadvantages on that account, or having any of his relations, or those depending on him, suffer in the world on account of his religious opinion. (*Hear, hear.*) The Hon. Member for Corfe Castle (Mr. Bankes) had appeared to consider, that any change at all must endanger the whole Constitution in Church and State. The Right Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Yorke) seemed to be of a similar opinion. He believed that he might confidently say, that nine-tenths of the property of Ireland,—of the wealth, ability, and respectability of Ireland, were in favour of the Claims. (*No, no, from some of the Members.*) He believed almost every body in Ireland who did not belong to the Government, or had not in some way been drawn under its baneful influence, were friendly to the claims. As to the Irish Government, he would say, that it was treated throughout that country with the contempt it deserved. It had been one unvarying system of intolerant imbecility for many years. The Presbyterians, as well as the Protestants, had now discovered, that it was for the common interests that their Catholic brethren should have their rights, and that it was not proper or fitting that a system should be persevered in, which went only to exalt a few bigoted persons, and to debase the whole nation. A great deal had been said about the Petitions on the table. He should generally observe, that almost all the Petitions against the Catholics had been obtained in a clandestine manner. He knew well the feeling which pervaded the south of Ireland, and the sense of the great, powerful, and independent county which he represented,—the county of Tipperary, (*a laugh.*) He believed that it would be found, by the returns of the navy and army, that Ireland contributed to the defence of the empire more men than even England; and of those which it contributed, by much the greater part were Catholics. For a long time that fine and beautiful country had been ruled by oppression, and with a rod of iron. (*No, no, from many Members.*)

When they were obliged to govern the country by force, it was evident that their cause was weak. If this odious system was abandoned, and a system of conciliation adopted in its place, it would double the strength of the Empire. There would be then no occasion for enlisting foreign Catholics, as we now do, to fight our battles. They need no longer have recourse to the barbarous and inhuman system of dragging men from their homes and families, by impressment, to man their navies. This odious service, of the Impress, might be completely done away, (*Order, order, from many Members.*) He would shew them how it could be done away. If Ireland were but conciliated, there could be no objection to enrolling, from their birth, one or two of every family, for the service of the country. (*laughter.*) The Hon. General then detailed a plan, taking in a national system of education, and a variety of other things, which he conceived, with this enrollment, would do away entirely the necessity of continuing to impress seamen. He thought that if Ireland was once conciliated, she might afford double the number that she now sends to the general service of the Empire. The number of recruits now raised from Ireland was nothing near so great as it was formerly; and he conceived a principal reason of this falling off was, that the people had grown more learned and enlightened than they were formerly. He believed that the Catholic Committees, and the Catholic Board, had done a great deal to shew them the debased and degraded state in which they now are (*hear, hear, from the Ministerial benches*); and that they now felt the weight of their chains much more than they had formerly done. He allowed, for the sake of argument, that there were many men among the Catholics who had acted violently and intemperately; and that those men might in time grow into leaders of the people, and factious demagogues. But what was the way to weaken, and keep down those men? There was no surer way than taking from them the tools by which alone they could act, or gain any importance; and this was

only to be effected by conciliating the people. The Catholics might have acted intemperately, but not unconstitutionally. The Irish Attorney-General, and all the minions and satellites of the Castle of Dublin, were perpetually on the watch to convict them if they had said or done any thing that was unconstitutional; but they could not convict them of any such act. In his opinion, the Catholics had gone far enough, and too far, in petitioning for, year after year, as a favour, that which he conceived they ought to demand as a right. (*Hear, hear.*) He certainly had endeavoured as much as he could, to induce the Catholics of Tipperary to claim it as a right. (*Laughter and cries of hear, hear.*) The way he should establish the right was this: when James the Second abdicated his English throne, he had not at the same time abdicated the throne of Ireland, which was then a separate country. The Irish nation, loyal as they had always been to their lawful Sovereign, raised a force in his defence, and invited him over to join them. By his dastardly and indecisive conduct, and by the superiority of tactics and military skill on the part of the army of King William, James was finally defeated at the battle of the Boyne, and soon after abandoned Ireland as he had before abandoned England. The Irish army, however, still fought from field to field and town to town, until they retired to the fortress of Limerick, where a capitulation was entered into and afterwards ratified by King William, by which it was stipulated, "that they should continue to possess every advantage, civil or military, that was enjoyed by the most favoured of his Majesty's subjects." In the fourth year, however, of King William's reign, this solemn treaty was violated, and by the strength and assistance of a British Parliament. He considered the violation of this solemn treaty as one of the most flagrant acts of perfidy ever committed by any Government, or any country; and he thought that the stain of deliberate perjury could never be removed from the English nation, unless they were resolved to do what was in their power to have the stipulations of this solemn treaty carried into execution. He, therefore, did feel the

claim to be a claim of right, and not of favour ; and as such, he certainly did in Ireland always speak his sentiments, that the Catholics should rather demand their right, than petition for it as a boon and favour. The same language that he held in his own country, he would repeat here, and solicit the Parliament as strongly as it was in his power, to restore to the Catholics of Ireland that which was their natural right, and which was moreover solemnly guaranteed to them by the treaty of Limerick, which was signed and ratified by King William the Third. He concluded by saying, that he would at all times, as long as he had a seat in that House, and as long as this question should be brought before them, vote for an entire emancipation of the Catholics, without any restriction, limitation, or qualification whatsoever.

Sir EYRE COOTE said, he should vote for the motion of the Right Hon. Gentleman, in order that it might be determined in the Committee, what should be admitted, and what withheld from the Catholics. He could not, himself, conceive any danger from the admission of the Roman Catholics into the highest ranks in the army. Their loyalty and attachment to the British constitution were well known ; their feelings, as well as their bravery and devotion to the service, had never been weakened by restrictions. He could mention some instances from his own knowledge. The House would recollect the expedition which in 1793 sailed from Ireland, under the command of that great officer, Sir Charles Grey. That excellent commander, great in the council, and great in the field, had declared to him (Sir E. C.) that he owed his conquests in the West Indies to his Irish army. (*Hear, hear.*) Egypt, and Holland, and the Peninsula, were still more recent instances of the loyalty and gallantry of Irish Catholics. He saw, therefore, no reason why the House should not go into a Committee to consider what claims to allow, and what to reject. They ought to act on the known principle, that liberality begets liberality, and confidence produces confidence. (*Hear, hear.*)

Sir NICHOLAS COULTHURST said, he should vote for going into the Committee. The Parliament of last Session had performed the duty of wise and considerate Legislators, and had pledged themselves to an enquiry into this most important subject. He conceived, that the pledge was binding on their successors, if it should appear that the importance remained the same, and that the circumstances which then influenced their votes, still existed. He hoped that the present House would consent to such adjustments as would be conciliatory ; such as every well-wisher to his country must rejoice to see.

He did not think the proceedings of the Catholics any argument against our listening to their claims. It was not a question, what was their temper, but what ought to be their rights ? There was no contest between the House and them : the House was legislating for them, not with them.

Consideration and decision, he should maintain, were very different things. At the same time that he gave his vote for going into a Committee, he should reserve to himself the right of expressing, perhaps, a different opinion in a different stage of the proceeding : he thought no avowal of his sentiments on the main question was at all necessary. He was the advocate for enquiry, because he thought some enquiry was necessary ; and because, to stifle investigation, might tend to danger and destruction. (*Hear, hear.*)

Mr. HART DAVIS said he could not consent to go into the Committee, unless some safeguards should be specified, and some rational practicable scheme be, in the first instance, proposed. For, in his opinion, if the House should go out of the Committee without coming to any result favourable to the Catholics, dissatisfaction, and not content, would ensue from the enquiry.

Sir JOHN STEWART begged that the House would look with sympathy on a long oppressed and injured people. His Hon. Friend had yesterday, with all the force of an enlightened mind, given clearness and dignity to the cause which he advocated ; but very different was the conduct of the Honourable General

who spoke last, who had broached some monstrous and hurtful propositions. The first had used the language of conciliation, and not of irritation; nor did he in one moment convert four into five millions of persons.

The two kingdoms of Ireland and England had long been kept distinct: their feuds and animosities were hereditary: and yet no people could be more brave and affectionate than the Irish. The cause of all the evils which had afflicted Ireland, were to be referred to the circumstance of her being a conquered country. He could not agree to the unqualified concession demanded by some friends of the Catholics, nor could he allow their claim to be founded on right.

The Hon. Baronet then paid a high eulogium to the Orange party, on account of their strong attachment to the memory of the illustrious King William; and said, that they could never cease to drink to his memory, while wine remained in which they could pledge his health. (*A laugh.*) He thought, that would be the wisest policy which should embrace all parties in its comprehensive arrangements; he should therefore vote for the Committee, though he did not think that satisfactory securities could easily be found.

Mr. J. DALY said, toleration was the birthright of every man who lived under the British Constitution. He could not allow that the Protestants were inimical to the Catholic requests: the prayer of their petitions was, for the most part, that the concession of their claims should not be allowed, unless ample and competent securities were instituted for the preservation of the establishments in Church and State.

This prayer implied to his mind, that if these safeguards were furnished and found to be satisfactory, the Protestants would not longer be unwilling to allow to their Catholic fellow-subjects a full participation of these blessings which themselves enjoy. It became therefore a duty in his mind to vote for a Committee which should fully investigate the merits of the case, and provide such safe-guards as might be satisfactory to both parties in this great question.

Mr. W. FITZGERALD took an enlarged view of the claims of the Roman Catholics with respect to their positive merits, and the security which was due to the establishment by law of Church and State. He thought that the House could not, with any fairness, be called upon to decide upon the pretensions of the Catholics of ancient times, and, therefore, he differed from the Honourable General upon that peculiar ground, and did not lament the victory of the Boyne. If any thing could more emphatically than any other demonstrate the just policy of acceding to the claims of the Catholics, it would be found in their constant, and he might truly add, their inviolable attachment to the Monarch, who, invested with constitutional power, ruled over them. He alluded to the acknowledged attachment of the Irish people to the throne in the times the most trying,—those of the first Charles; and which was also most eminently, however mistakenly, exemplified in their devotion and zeal to James. The proofs of loyalty which they had so frequently given, were not to be done away by the declarations or the actions of private individuals. An Hon. Baronet had said, that there did not exist any recognised and certain power with which the Government and the Legislature were to treat. That, he begged leave to state, was not the question before the House. Parliament did not negotiate,—did not in fact condescend to enter into a treaty with those over whom it possessed the right of regulation and control. If it were the opinion of Parliament that measures of conciliation should be adopted, the wisdom of Parliament would necessarily dictate that line of conduct, whether due to the merits of the claimants, or to the peculiar circumstances under which they were submitted to the consideration of the Legislature. For his own part, he was bound to declare most distinctly, that in the vote he should give for going into the Committee, he did not consider himself pledged to any specific measure. He was ready to go into it, for the express purpose of providing by every effectual means for the security of the Protestant Interest, and preserving unimpaired to the Established Church, its principles and its sanctity,

in all their original energy and purity. He would say, with that confidence resulting from a conscientious conviction, that, like the Right Honorable Baronet, he wished the House to go into the Committee, because it appeared to him the best way of fearing God and honouring the King. He certainly had not any intention of offering himself to the notice of the House on the present question, but he felt that, filling the situation he did, to be silent upon the subject, would be to manifest an indifference no less repugnant to his reason than to his feelings. He would, both in office and out of office, and whatever his connections in Parliament might be, always vote for a consideration so intimately involving the vital interests of the empire as the present. He candidly admitted, that the conduct of the Catholic Board had been marked with a spirit of violence altogether unjustifiable; but that conduct had been sufficiently punished by the way in which it had been turned against the cause which they advocated. To raise objections to the cause on account of the intemperance of its advocates, would, he begged leave to maintain, be altogether inconsistent with the impartiality and wisdom of Parliament. He was the more strongly inclined to go into the Committee, from a conviction that domestic settlement would preclude all foreign interference; and he trusted, that measures would be devised in the Committee to prevent a Protestant Monarch from being asked to grant that which a Catholic Sovereign felt it his duty to refuse. Whether the object was to be attained by acts of grace or by stipends to the Catholic Clergy, he should not presume to decide; but every view he was enabled to take of the subject, convinced him of the necessity of going into the Committee. He would not dwell upon the very extraordinary laws which rendered the English Roman Catholic more subject to privations and penalties than the Irish, and placed at the same time the Irish, when in this country, in a situation much worse than he filled in Ireland; but was it not unaccountable and preposterous, that where the Established Church was most secure, there the Catholic should be most peculiarly subject to penalties and hardships?

Mr. PROTHEROE declared his determination to vote against the motion.

Mr. WYATT expressed his decided opinion, that the House should go into the Committee. He could not deliver this opinion, without adding, that he believed the Roman Catholics were not adverse to the constitution; and that, as loyal subjects, they were fully qualified, not only for all the enjoyments of civil privileges, but for the purposes of legislation.

Sir FREDERICK FLOOD thought that the House were bound to consider the resolution of the last Parliament respecting the claims of the Catholics as its last will and testament, the probate of which, he trusted, the Right Honourable Judge of the Prerogative in Ireland (Dr. Duigenan) would grant, without thinking for one instant of entering a caveat. It was, in fact, the will of 238 persons, witnessed by no less than upwards of 160 who were known by the name of a minority. He considered the claims of the Catholics so justly founded in their past services to the Constitution, and in their existing loyalty, as to entitle them to the protection of the Legislature. Power ought to be equally diffused among all classes of his Majesty's subjects. He would read an extract from the Edinburgh Review, page 35 of some number, (*a laugh*.) in which was a quotation from a pamphlet of Dr. Duigenan, which stated, that were the two countries one people, the Protestant majority would be, on the whole, so great, that all rivalry would be at an end, and it would be unnecessary to curb the Romanists by restrictive laws. So said the book, and so said the Doctor! (*a laugh*.) He then read from a book of Sir J. C. Hippisley's, which stated, that 360 out of 400 in a naval hospital were Catholics; that in a depot in the Isle of Wight there were 150 Protestants out of 4000; all the rest being Catholics; and that at the taking of Monte Video, there were 3000 Catholic soldiers engaged. He did not speak this because he was himself an Irishman; but he was sure there were no better soldiers than Irishman: none were better by land or by sea. There might be mistrust of them, and error on their part in their own country;

but take them out of their own country, and there was not a finer body of men in the world ! (*Laughing and cry of adjourn.*)

Sir JOHN NEWPORT rose and said a few words. (*Adjourn !*) The worthy Baronet then observed, that he should move to adjourn. (*Go on ! Hear !*)

Mr. ROUND hoped for the indulgence of the House, of which he was a new Member. He was as well disposed as any to enquire into the state of grievances which affected his fellow-subjects, but felt it impossible to assent to the motion. The Constitution was Protestant, and required a Protestant ascendancy. He, while ready to listen to all representations could not turn his back upon the various Protestant Petitions which lay on the table, so numerous, and so respectably signed. He deemed it his duty, in every view of the question, to resist the proposition in favour of the Catholic Claims, (*Cry of question.*)

Sir J. NEWPORT again moved an adjournment (*go on*).

Lord CASTLEREAGH said, that it was, no doubt, impossible at that time to conclude the discussion without an adjournment. The only consideration was, whether the adjournment should take place then, or at a later hour ; perhaps the present time would be the best. The House then adjourned till Monday.

THIRD DAY.

Monday, March 1.

Sir JOHN NEWPORT moved the Order of the Day, for resuming the debate on the subject of the Catholic Claims.

The Hon. Baronet said, that had the question been left under the same circumstances in which it was in the last year, he should have left it on the statement of his Right Hon. Friend who had opened the question, and that of another Honourable Gentleman to whom the House had paid the greatest attention ; but, unhappily, circumstances had been superadded which

required to be noticed. Persons had used every art to prevent a fair discussion of the question,---extraordinary pains had been taken to urge it on the great body of the people, that it vitally regarded their religion. He considered it to be a question much fitter for the consideration of Parliament than any other public meeting. Some Ecclesiastics of high rank had put themselves forward in the most marked manner, and he thought it would have been more proper for them, after a former Parliament had entered into a resolution to consider those claims, to have left the question to the discretion of Parliament. No beneficial effects could be expected from the Charges of Learned Bishops to their Clergy, in which they charged the whole body of the Roman Catholics with disaffection and treason. In one of those charges a Learned Bishop asks, who would employ in his private concerns, a person whom he knew to be disaffected to his interest, and desirous of his ruin? insinuating, that the whole body of the Roman Catholics were ready to rejoice at the ruin of the country. But he was not satisfied with insinuating such a charge,---he made it in direct terms; and it called for the animadversion of his Majesty's Ministers. He asks, were not the demands of the Catholics granted in 1790, under a promise of peaceable conduct, and the greatest exertion in the cause of the country; and under a promise that the Papists would not apply for further indulgence? (To prove that this was false, the Honourable Baronet declared, that it was on that occasion put to the then Secretary of State, now the Earl of Buckinghamshire, whether the Papists would be satisfied were the then demands gratified? he said, he was not authorised to make any promise.) The charge then went on to say, "Having thus got strength, had they not invited the French, had they not done every thing to bring about a separation from this country, and Catholic ascendancy?" This was a direct charge of treason, but he was sure the Noble Lord on the opposite side would not sanction such a charge. It was not a Catholic rebellion; out of the Directory there was but one Catholic. At the time of the

invasion at Bantry Bay, the Catholics were not organized, but gave their strenuous assistance to the Government. The House should not look to the Council of Lateran, but to the practical effects of the religion in Europe. At present Hungary much resembled Ireland. It had been divided between two contending sects, and as long as one party was excluded from equal rights and privileges, so long was the country a prey to internal discord; and often did the contending parties call in the Turks; but when both parties, in 1791, were put upon an equal footing, the country became immediately tranquillized. It was ridiculous to suppose, that the Catholics would be less loyal when less oppressed: but this was a favourite doctrine with those persons who opposed the Catholic claims. He had made every enquiry of persons likely to be well informed on the subject, but they knew nothing of the protest alleged to have been made by the Pope against Buonaparte's universal toleration. He did not, therefore, say it was a fabrication, but he must be allowed to say, that this was the age of fabrication: a third part of the penal laws had been fabricated; and although it was stated to have been so clumsy an imposition as not to impose upon any body, he believed numbers had been deceived; and it could scarcely be considered so very clumsy, since the *Quarterly Review* had reviewed it as an authentic production. He should follow the advice of the Honourable Baronet opposite, although he had not added the force of his example to his precept, and abstain from all angry discussion of past events in Ireland; but he could not admit his vindication of Orange-men, whose oath was equally illegal with that of the United Irishmen. The oath of allegiance, whether qualified in one or another, ought not to be tolerated by any Government. The petitioners claimed the full benefit of the Constitution, and he hoped that the House by granting the prayer of the petition would add union and strength to the empire.

Mr. WELLESLEY POLE rose and observed, that, considering the situation which he had lately held in

the Government of Ireland, and the relation in which he stood in regard to that country, he thought it would be unbecoming in him to give a silent vote on a question so deeply affecting the condition and interests of Ireland as the present. The situation in which the House found itself, with respect to this subject, was somewhat extraordinary. It had been discussed no less than three times in the last Session; and circumstances had so changed in the interval between the second and last time of discussion, that the House at last agreed, that it would in the subsequent Session go into a Committee, to consider the claims of the Catholics, with a view to conciliation. Had it not therefore been for the unexpected dissolution of the last Parliament, the House must, he presumed, as a matter of course, have entered into this conciliatory enquiry. He did not say, however, that the resolution of the last House of Commons was binding upon the present; but he might at least assume, that it ought to have the greatest weight. It had raised the expectation of the Catholics of Ireland to such a height, as would embitter their disappointment in case of failure, and had even contributed to change the opinions of many of the Protestants in regard to the Catholic question. In order to give the House as much information on this subject as he could, he would shortly state, what he conceived the situation and feelings of Ireland to be, as connected with this question. In doing this, he could not put out of the question the transactions which had taken place during a space of two years, between the Government and the Catholic Committees. It had fallen to his share to complain bitterly of the misrepresentations to which the Irish Government had been exposed in the course of these transactions. It was now, he believed, generally admitted, that the Government of Ireland, in its proceedings respecting the Catholic Convention, (for he still contended, the meeting was a Convention, and not a Committee,) had only done its duty; that it had interfered by the advice of the Law-officers, only to prevent the transgression of the law in a manner which would have been highly dangerous to the State. The

Catholics from petitioning : its design was to prevent a very large body of people from following a course, and adopting measures, which the Members of that Government thought might be attended with the most alarming consequences. Instead of acting with any hostility towards the Catholics, he affirmed, that under similar circumstances, they would have acted with more vigour and promptitude against any other description of persons. The conduct of the Government, however, at that time, excited a ferment among the Catholics of Ireland ; but the result of it was that the Convention ceased to exist, and that it was succeeded by a Catholic Board, or a Committee of a very different description, as to number, tone, and other very material circumstances. But the transactions between the Government and this Convention produced other very important results. It produced, undoubtedly, a great deal of most intemperate language, which was well calculated to injure the country, and no part of it more than the Catholics themselves ; but it also had the effect of inducing the Catholics, all over the kingdom, to hold legal meetings for the sake of petitioning ; and from that circumstance much information was communicated to the House, which could not otherwise have been procured. It had been said, that the lower orders were perfectly indifferent about what was called Catholic emancipation, and that it was only desired by a few individuals of the higher ranks. It was now proved that the meanest Catholic was as anxious for it as the highest. But the effect of the proceedings of government did not stop there. When the Protestants saw the Catholics in every corner petitioning, they were induced to consider the question more deeply. The consequence was, that many of those, who before thought that the cry for the removal of disabilities was only a stalking-horse for other purposes, began to see the subject in a different light. He did not allude to the county of Fermanagh, but to the Protestant inhabitants of such counties as that which he represented. After maturely weighing the subject, they came now to the House, and said—" grant what

you can—but take care to secure the establishment.” Such was the information with respect to the state and feelings of Ireland, as connected with this question, produced by the conduct of the Government. He admitted that the language of the Catholics had been most intemperate; but without advertg to the tone of the Catholics, or the speeches of their advocates, he would vote for a consideration of their petitions; and if it should appear proper to make concessions, he would at the same time insist upon whatever security the nature of the case might require. He fully believed, that in consequence of the consideration lately given to the subject by the Irish Protestants, a majority of them,—nay, almost all,—now thought, that it would be safe and wholesome to grant the Claims of the Catholics, if accompanied with satisfactory security for the Protestant Establishment. (*Hear, hear.*) This measure had for twelve years been the subject of Cabinet opposition. The Cabinet had been unanimous in the opinion, that nothing could be done; and even during one portion of the last Session, the Cabinet had unanimously declared, that the time for concession had not then arrived; yet, in two months from the period of this declaration, the loss of a great man (Mr. Perceval), which every man must lament, and which he sincerely deplored, together with other occurrences, had so changed the state of things, that even his Noble Friend (Lord Castlereagh) had declared, that this was no longer a Cabinet measure, but that Ministers were to vote in regard to the question as individuals. The House then passed the resolution to which he had already adverted; and it was unfortunate, to say the least of it, that his Noble Friend and his colleagues, had not in the course of the summer collected the proper information, and prepared a measure to be laid before Parliament: but his Noble Friend would no doubt give cogent reasons for the failure of Government in this business; and he hoped the reasons would be convincing and satisfactory to the House, as he understood his Noble Friend intended to vote for going into the Committee. He again distinctly

Catholic concessions ; for he observed, that those counties which had been rather unfavorable to the Catholics, now petitioned in their favour,—such as the county which he had the honour to represent ; and those counties which had been formerly most violent in their opposition to the Catholics—such as the King's County, now opposed them, at least in a milder and more moderate tone. It was said, that it appeared from these petitions, that the minds of the Protestants had undergone a change unfavourable to the Catholics. The very reverse of this was, on the contrary, clearly proved : for whatever change had taken place was decidedly in favour of conciliation. This was so evident, that it was impossible for any one, who had been accustomed to mark the progress of opinion in Ireland, to deny it. There were no doubt petitions against the Catholics from certain Protestants in Ireland, but he was sure the Government there could not have made any unfair exertions to forward such petitions. The Duke of Richmond, he was sure, would do nothing unfair in regard to this or any other business. His (Mr. Pole's) one half, the Chancellor of the Irish Exchequer, was decidedly in favour of the consideration of the claims of the Catholics. To be sure his other half, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, was of a contrary opinion ; possibly on account of his superior experience of Ireland, (*A laugh.*) The Chief Secretary was, indeed, against all manner of concession ; and was firmly convinced, that the bare act of putting a silk gown upon a Catholic Barrister would be attended with inevitable ruin to the country. He would ask, however, whether, considering the present state of Ireland, and the feelings prevalent there on this subject, it was not more necessary to go into a committee, and adopt some conciliatory measures now, than it was last year ? (*Hear, hear.*) He believed there was hardly a man in Ireland who thought that the question could remain as it then stood. (*Hear, hear.*) He allowed there were many who thought that more ought not to be given to the Catholics, but then by far the greater portion of these persons thought that some of the disabling statutes ought to be re-enacted. He believed his friend under

Orange Societies in general thought, that in the way of concession the Legislature had gone too far. (*Hear, hear.*) Why, then, almost all were agreed that matters could not remain as they were; and the question was, whether they were to go backwards or forwards? How any one who knew the anomalous state of the Catholics could believe that things could remain as they were, was to him astonishing. His Hon. Friends on the other side (Grattan and Plunkett) had adverted to this point, and discussed it with their characteristic talent. Ireland had certainly increased in riches and knowledge since the Union. He had opposed the Union, because he did not believe that it would have been attended with any such effects. But he freely confessed that he was mistaken. But how had Ireland increased in riches and knowledge? A *vacuum* had been left by the removal of the Parliament, and the number of absentees which of course followed. This *vacuum* was filled up by the Catholics, and it was by their means that the wealth and information of the country had increased. In such a state of things, how was it possible for any one to imagine that matters could continue in their actual situation? They must sooner or later re-enact the old disabling laws,—raise a rebellion,—or agree to conciliate the Catholics. If the House chose to go into a Committee, no one would be pledged by that to do any thing that might be dangerous to Church and State. The Bill could not be prepared all at once. This would require long and serious deliberation. Many questions of great nicety might occur; and he hoped his Right Hon. Friend would consult the Catholic Delegates, and neglect nothing that could give him information and assistance. He agreed that the Legislature was not to treat with the Catholics; but it was proper to ask, and take whatever assistance could be derived from them. To all that could be granted in perfect consistency with the security of the State, the Catholics had a right. He hailed it as a most fortunate omen, that even those who had been the least impressed with a sense of the value of securities, admitted, that for the purpose of real conciliation, it was necessary that such securities should be given as

would quiet the consciences of the Protestants ; and prove to both Catholic and Protestant that the establishment must be protected. Such was his view of the question, though he did not pledge himself as to how he should come out of the Committee. From the failure of Ministers to take up this question, the House was placed in an embarrassing situation ; but they must meet and overcome the difficulty as they were best able. Before he sat down, he could not help requesting the House to consider what must be the consequence to Ireland, if such of the Ministers as were hostile to the Catholics should prevail on the House not to go into the Committee. It would be placing a blister all over the country, which they must be perpetually touching. " Two great men of the Irish Government," (continued Mr. W. Pole,) " differ on the subject. My one-half, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, thinks it of the last importance to adopt measures of conciliation. My other half, the Chief Secretary, thinks the country would be ruined if we were to go into the Committee. The House,—suppose,—refuse to go into the Committee. My two halves (*a laugh*) return to Ireland. Disturbances take place in Tipperary, and deputies arrive from that quarter, and wait upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer. ' I told them so,' (says the Chancellor of the Exchequer) : ' Parliament has done very wrong : we shall have nothing but disturbances all over the country ; but go to the Chief Secretary, he is the proper person to give you directions.' The deputies then get a step higher, and wait upon my other half (*a laugh*), the Chief Secretary, who, upon hearing their story, declares that it is very surprising, and that he thought the last special commission had settled matters there. He then sends for the Solicitor-General, the Attorney-General being out of the way, and asks, what is to be done ? My friend, Mr. Bush, immediately answers, ' I told you how it would be twelve months ago. This is the consequence of the course which has been adopted : but send for the Attorney-General, Mr. Saurin, he is a man after your own heart, and the most proper to advise you on this occasion.' (*Hear, hear.*) In short, the collision between the different parts of

the Government will be perpetual, and divisions and heart-burnings must constantly prevail in the country." Many branches of the Government had been reformed during the Duke of Richmond's administration, but with great difficulty even when united. How, then, could it perform that duty when divided? The question was in a very different situation from what it was when he was in administration. (*Hear, hear.*) There was then no difference. All agreed, that the time for conciliation was not come. The difference now was as great as that of light and darkness. But even then he had, in confidence, urged to his colleagues the necessity of conciliation, and his opinions were then put on record. Such were his views upon this most important question. If the House should entertain it, he would give it his most earnest attention, and afford every assistance in his power towards framing a measure which should, as far as possible, satisfy all parties, and at length set the question finally to rest.

Mr. WILLIAM FITZGERALD explained. He denied that in any part of his speech on a former night, he had said any thing hostile to the most intimate and confidential communications with the Catholic Body on the subject of their claims.

Mr. PEELE considered the speech of the Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. Pole) as one of the most extraordinary which the House had ever heard. However much his Right Honourable Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer for Ireland, and himself, might differ on this subject, yet they could not differ more from each other, than the Right Hon. Gentleman had done from himself. The same Right Hon. Gentleman, in allusion to the two offices which he had lately held, had thought proper to call them his two halves; and it must be allowed, that though we cannot represent him in personal unity, yet in diversity of opinion we may. What did the Right Honourable Gentleman but acknowledge, that though he differed in opinion from the Duke of Richmond's Government, yet he sacrificed those opinions, and fulfilled diametrically opposite commands. (*Hear, hear.*) Surely it would have been more commendable to have relin-

quished office than to relinquish consistency. The speech of the Right Hon. Gentleman was of such a kind, that it was impossible to answer it (*hear, hear, from the opposite side*), unless by reference to his own speeches on former occasions. He now alluded to a printed speech of the Right Honourable Gentleman on the question of the Catholic Convention, in which he declared, that from the then state of the Catholic mind in Ireland, he saw no possibility of admitting them to the participation of farther privileges. But, it seems, the Right Honourable Gentleman justified this total change of opinion, on the ground of the dissolution of the Catholic Committee as a body. In what respect, however, were their conduct or pretensions altered? Had we not seen Catholics of Dublin, skulking behind the letter of the law, re-appoint every thing in an Aggregate Meeting, which they had formerly resolved in a Catholic Convention? The Right Hon. Gentleman had remarked on the diversity of opinion between himself, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer for Ireland. He certainly felt great regret that any such difference of opinion should exist, and should be extremely sorry if it tended at all to disunite the sincere friendship which he entertained for him. The Hon. Member then proceeded to contend, that the vote of last session, by no means bound the House to agree to the motion for going into a Committee. That vote, to which, however, he did not accede, was by no means unconditional in its terms: it pledged the House to take the Catholic claims into consideration, with a view to such final and satisfactory adjustment, as might at the same time provide for the stability of the Protestant Church, and prove satisfactory and conciliatory to the people at large. Now was there any likelihood of coming at present to a final adjustment of these claims, such as would provide for the protection of the Protestant Establishment, and be satisfactory to all classes of his Majesty's subjects? (*hear, hear.*) The Catholics, themselves, in one of their late meetings, (he meant that at Kilkenny), had formally declared, that to talk of stipulating conditions, as the price of their admittance to political privileges, was a direct in-

sult on their body. How, then, could this be the proper time, when the Catholics, on the one hand, were prepared to spurn all stipulations ; and when, on the other, the great body of the Protestants were swayed and influenced by feelings of alarm. The Right Hon. Mover, had, indeed, told us, he had a plan to propose ; but it was that of a simple repeal of all the existing disabilities ; it was to destroy every distinction between sects, as he called them, except in so far as respected the succession to, and enjoyment of, the Throne. We were graciously promised, indeed, a preamble confirmatory of the Protestant establishment ; but at this time of day we wanted no such clause,—the great constitutional law, of which it formed an essential part, did not require any new confirmation from an Act to be passed in the 53d year of the reign of George III.---to be commonly called Mr. Grattan's Act!---But the Protestants of the Church of England, were, forsooth, denominated sectaries by the Right Honourable Gentleman. While they were anxious for maintaining the Protestant establishment, they were said to be actuated by a sectarian spirit ; their petitions were represented as praying for the ascendancy of a sect, while those of the Catholics were directed to the ascendancy of the law. But to what sect did we belong ? Why to the Protestant establishment, as built upon the fundamental laws of the State. He admitted that there were excrescences in the system which ought to be removed ; but he denied that the system itself was wrong. He, the Honourable Member, complimented a Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Plunkett) on the manly sincerity which he had always displayed on this question. Had he lent his great talents to the support of the Catholic Committee, there was no extent of adulation of which he would not have been the object ; no height of fantastic honours which he would not have obtained. He might have shared with the Bishop of Norwich in all the honours of the feast, and been with him associated in the dinners and the orgies of Black-alley. (*Loud cries of hear, hear, from both sides of the House.*) One of the toasts at the dinner given to the Bishop, and which might be considered

as a specimen of the rest, was " Mr. Cobbett, and the independent press of Ireland !" He wanted to know why the Catholic Gentry of Ireland did not rescue themselves from the imputation of connection with the agitators of that country. He recollected that in 1791, when these agitators were at work, sixty-eight of the Catholic Nobility and Gentry retired from their connection, and presented a dutiful address to the Throne, in which they expressed their gratitude for past favours, and their reliance on the future liberality of the Legislature. The House would hardly believe that the names of Fingal, Kenmare, Troy, &c. were affixed to this Address ; and when the views of the present factious agitators of Dublin were considered ; would it not be equally proper for these Noblemen to come forward now with a similar address ? But why, he would ask, should the Catholic be excluded from the throne, if admitted to a share in the two other branches of the Legislature ? But, if excluded from the throne, would the Right Hon. Mover allow the Catholic to be Lord Chancellor, the Keeper of the Conscience of a Protestant King ? Or would he allow him to be Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, who, of course, had so much Church preferment in his gift ? Where was a stand to be made ? What degree of exclusion was to remain, however small, that would not still preserve the leaven of discontent and disaffection in the Catholic Body ? Besides, should Parliament grant the Catholics eligibility to every office, the invidious task would remain upon the Crown of making distinctions unpalatable to that body. He acknowledged that the bar in the road to office was a grievance which must be felt by the Catholics, but they were excluded, not on account of their religious opinions, but their political ones. They had never yet taken the oath, that no foreign Power, Potentate, or Prelate, had any authority in this country. The claims of the Catholics in this country, are such as never were admitted in any other. It was true, that religion was established in Canada, but the Crown had the appointment of the Bishop. In Russia, when the Empress Catharine founded several Catholic sees, she, at the same time

retained, the power of appointing the Bishops that were to fill them. It was contended, that the Catholics were admitted to the enjoyment of the elective franchise; and therefore the House in consistency were bound to concede more, and allow the right of representation. But he would ask, if the Catholics of Tipperary had even that eligibility, where would they find a louder advocate than the Hon. Gen. (Mathew) who was now their representatives? (*Laugh.*) Where, again, would the Catholics of Waterford find a representative more attentive to their interest than the Hon. Baronet who was Member for that city? The truth was, that they were really, as well as virtually, represented in the legislature of the country. The Hon. Member proceeded to contend, that the claims of the Catholics ought not to be conceded, till they themselves had defined and fixed the distinction between the spiritual and temporal powers of the Pope and their clergy. That sensible writer, who took the title of 'Columbanus,' had shewn, that the boundaries of these powers had hitherto been kept so obscure and indistinct, that it was impossible to disunite them. He could not see that it was possible to obtain any securities for the Protestant establishment at present, when the Catholic Prelates had declared, that in their present want of communication with the Head of their Church, it was impossible for them to accede to any other mode of nomination than that which at present existed. On these grounds he felt himself compelled to vote for delay, till some satisfactory arrangement of this sort could be made.

Mr. GRATTAN explained.

The Hon. J. W. WARD observed, that after so much eloquence and argument had been exhausted in support of this motion, it was not his intention to detain the House at any great length. Indeed, it appeared to him, that the arguments on the other side of the question had been so often refuted, that they had very considerably lost their hold, even on the prejudices of the people. The progress of public opinion on this subject, within a few years, had been so rapid, salutary and triumphant that we might look forward

with confidence to the final prevalence of justice and truth. The only question which now seemed to excite difference of opinion, was, whether the claims of the Catholics should be delayed, or granted forthwith. It was impossible not to remark the gradually increasing popularity with which they had been received, both in that House and in the country ; till at last, in the late Parliament, which was chosen under circumstances peculiarly unfavourable to the cause, the principles of liberality and conciliation had been triumphantly established by a large majority, which he trusted would be equally conspicuous on the present occasion. Was it to be believed, indeed, that in a country where freedom of discussion existed, opinions, sanctioned by the unanimous voice of Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Burke, and which were also supported by all the principal living Statesmen of our day, would not finally prevail ? Whatever political leader a man might follow, still on this point, though differing on so many others, he will naturally be led to the same conclusion. These circumstances furnished a strong presumption what the opinion of the public would ultimately be ; for was it not evident that the opinions of wise and good men naturally descended to all other classes of society ? It would not be according to the accustomed laws of opinion, were these doctrines not to make their way ; and it would be contrary to all experience and common sense, that an unshapely mass of prejudice should be erected on the foundations laid by philosophers and statesmen. When he heard an Hon. Member, early in the debate, (Mr. Tomline) attempting to discredit the opinion, that Mr. Pitt was decidedly friendly to the Catholic claims, he was apprehensive that some hitherto unknown document would be produced in support of the assertion ; but he had felt very much relieved on finding that the whole ended in a paltry surmise. The Hon. Gentleman asserted, that Mr. Pitt had formed to himself no plan on this subject ; and his reason for thinking so was, that he never had communicated any plan to a certain person in his confidence. But if that person happened to be an enemy of the Catholic claims, and also a subtle

and scholastic reasoner, there might be nothing extraordinary in the want of such communication. He had thought it right to say thus much, in justice to the memory of Mr. Pitt, as it was of importance that the opinions of great men should be cleared from misrepresentation. It was urged, that public opinion was unfavourable to concession: he did not deny it, though he was sorry that such sentiments were prevalent among the people, as disqualified them from appreciating the service which he hoped the Legislature would bestow upon them. At the same time it should be considered, whether this opinion was growing or declining,—of what materials it was composed,—and whether it was temporary or permanent. It would appear from investigation, that the opposition made to this question, and the evil arising from giving a shock to some prejudices by concession, would be of a very short duration, while the benefit accruing from it would be lasting and eternal. These prejudices sprung chiefly from an ignorance among the people as to the motives and views of the Catholics,—an ignorance which was daily giving way to discussion. The known sentiments of the King also had given an impulse to the public feeling, which still continued to act, though the immediate force was withdrawn: nor was this matter of astonishment, when it was remembered that it was the authority of a sovereign so justly revered for his virtues. (*Hear.*)

The influence of Government had its weight also in the direction of public opinion. Although the proposed measure had the support of two or three of his Majesty's Ministers, yet all those high Officers of Administration, in whom the chief power and patronage was lodged,—the first Lord of the Treasury, the Lord Chancellor, and the Home Secretary,—were decidedly hostile and Anti-Catholic. Whatever merit there might be in an arrangement of the cabinet, which enabled persons to act together, who must otherwise be separate, he professed himself unable to understand it, nor did the country seem to comprehend it. It was evidently thought that the administration was Anti-Catholic when it was seen

that its head, Lord Liverpool, was so, as also were the Lord Lieutenant and Lord Chancellor of Ireland. The whole weight of Government might, therefore, be fairly considered as thrown into the scale of the public opinion.

The last and weakest prejudice, was that which arose from the recollection of the tragic times of Queen Mary, and the persecutions of two centuries ago.

In all these prejudices the advocates of the Catholics would see nothing permanent, nothing to alarm, nothing which could long or successfully arrest the great cause of emancipation. The altered tone of the general popular mind was no doubtful proof of ultimate success; a success not to be retarded by the mischievous sophistry about the Coronation oath; or by the revival of contemptible calumnies, which, indeed, were now nowhere to be found, except in a few miserable pamphlets. A sense of shame prevents men from attaching any longer foul and abominable imputations to a religion, which has produced some of the wisest and most pious of mankind, a religion which is embraced by allies whom we admire, and forefathers whom we revere; a religion, to calumniate which is to degrade the common character of that Christianity which we all profess. (*Hear, hear.*) Those who resort to such doctrines of attack, at once proclaim their injustice, and their weakness; nor was it possible that their result could be any thing but failure. Toleration indeed was seen to advance with sure and accelerating steps: every day added confidence to the cause, which was never known to lose a proselyte, whom it had once gained. (*Hear.*)

What was the course of conduct pursued by the Government of the country? They pretended to talk of the necessity of delay. What! Did they think, that by misrepresentation and exaggeration, they could contrive to reanimate the expiring prejudices and passions of the people, and thus delay the measure till conciliation would be unattainable; that such delay would be a service to the country? Did they think that a delay to repeal the penal disqualifying code would materially assist towards recruiting our armies.

or towards begetting a delighted confidence in our friends and allies the Spaniards? No: they did not think or act with such absurd inconsistency. Whatever might be their pretence, it was not to a short respite, but to a permanent continuance of the established system which they looked. But let it be remembered, that matters have reached that point, when such a system is no longer salutary,—when it is no longer safe to resist the progress of the Catholic feeling; when, on the contrary, endeavours should be made to shorten that feverish interval, which, in all cases where civil and religious liberties are concerned, arises between the raised expectation of a promised boon, and its final grant. (*Hear, hear.*)

He did not pretend to say that the case was without difficulty. In the two islands which compose the nation existed two religions decidedly different. If four millions of Dissenters were scattered promiscuously over the two kingdoms, means might be found of keeping them at rest; but when they were confined to one island, nothing but forbearance and concession could tranquillize so powerful a body. He would, however, readily allow, that if the grant of the requested privileges, would endanger the Protestant establishment, no man could be justified in calling upon a Protestant Parliament, to concede their claims. But there was no inconsistency, there was no danger. It could not be denied, he supposed, that restriction was hurtful and degrading to man; and that the restraining Power ought to show some good reason for diminishing the full activity of a people. Some arguments, indeed, went the length of asserting, that none who entertained opinions contrary to the Orthodox Establishment were fit to hold office; yet Dissenters are allowed to sit in parliament, and hold certain offices; and this arrangement has now become permanent law. Persons, therefore, can scarcely venture to apply this argument in full against the Catholics. Well, but it is alleged that the Catholics hold dangerous and abominable opinions; these opinions, however, are disavowed by Catholic Bishops and by Catholic Universities.

These considerations, however, appeared to him to be foreign to the matters in debate; they might form a scholastic, a theological, or even a philosophical question; but as Statesmen they had another matter for deliberation, which was, what stability will be furnished by the addition of a large effective force to the resources of the empire. For an answer to this question look to the conduct of the Catholics: nothing could be more absurd than to judge of a people merely by their creeds, and articles of faith, and confessions: these things should, indeed, have their due consideration and weight; but the principal object to guide their decision should be the general conduct of the Catholics; their universal disposition, and the spirit of the age in which we live. (*Hear, hear.*) It was said, that their principles tended to the deposition and murder of Kings: be it so, or be it not so; yet for the last fifty years, this king-killing population had shewn the most zealous and loyal attachment to the Monarch and the Constitution (*Hear.*) They have a wish, it seems, that their religion might be the established one: well; was there ever yet a person existing who did not wish to see his own opinion universally prevalent? for instance, what Dissenting Gentleman of Scotland would not like to see the institution of a kirk? But the question was, had any undue means been used, would any be adopted for the accomplishment of such a purpose? Would the upright and distinguished leaders of the Catholics wade through all the misery, and bloodshed, and horror, to produce such a result? What overt acts led the House to infer such a possibility? What illicit correspondence with the Pope, what treasons, what rebellions, could be adduced in evidence?—No: there was nothing of all this; but then there were two or three obsolete dogmas not satisfactorily disclaimed, and, beside, there were the persecutions which raged two centuries ago. (*Hear, hear.*) Suppose, however, the disposition to exist, it became a question how far it would be affected by the repeal and the grant of additional power. Some Gentlemen in their discussions affected to consider the Catholics merely as Helots, or Paraguay Indians—mere stupid slavish machines: but this was

a mistake: the Catholics have power,—great power, founded on wealth and knowledge. Shall, then, a small addition be made to their power, to quiet their discontents; or shall their great and growing discontents be suffered to increase so as to make even their present power formidable to the State? The addition would not be very considerable: a few Members in each House of Parliament: a few Admirals and Generals. In a few years some might rise to the command of armies, and perhaps to a share in the Government of the country. But against this increase of power was to be placed the more liberal spirit which would necessarily be engendered amongst the professors of the Roman Religion. Catholics, if he might so say, would become less intensely Catholic. All the prejudices and hostile opinions which now separate them from the Protestants would be then wiped away: and the inducements of power, which are now found too weak to shake their ancient faith, would be strong enough to lower the proud feelings of bigotry and hatred. The fanaticism which could be dangerous, would, in this enlightened age, be utterly inconsistent with eligibility to places of power and trust. The penal statute would, indeed, no longer exist; but the public judgment would, in all cases of known bigotry, form a sufficient bar to office. And yet those who argue on the other side, confound, in one sweeping clause, the wise and the foolish, the enlightened and the uneducated. But who were the persons who would be most affected by the wished repeal? Not the soldier, but the General; not the peasant, but the Peer; not the constituent, but the Representative. It was to persons such as these, as wise and well educated as themselves, and not to low bigots, and ignorant fanatics, that power was to be extended. (*Hear, hear.*)

The objected ecclesiastical supremacy would be diminished, not increased by emancipation. Let the Catholics once taste the sweets of domestic political power, and they will no longer care for the interference of a foreign potentate: connect them with their natural legitimate sovereign, and extrinsic connections

will soon become a matter of indifference or contempt. (Hear.)

The question then is, whether a little more power shall be given to persons from whom it cannot with safety be withheld, or whether the country shall lose the services of honourable and enlightened men? a loss which every statesman must deplore, and which nothing but the most evident necessity should justify, especially in a country which, with all its disadvantages, has produced such men as Ireland—Mr. Burke, Lord Wellington, and he must be allowed to mention his Right Hon. Friend (Mr. Grattan).—Let, then, the boon be granted while the Irish are still loyal, and before disappointment is exacerbated into despair. (Hear.)

One argument which had been used, called, he thought, for particular animadversion. It had been said, that though the Catholic claims were entitled to consideration, yet the Catholics had forfeited all right to be heard, by their violent and intemperate conduct. What was the amount of this argument? If it prove any thing, it proves this,—that injustice shall last for ever. Might not the most cruel tyrant use this plea to his injured subjects—"My oppression has produced discontent, and therefore your discontent shall be punished by fresh oppression. It is true, that your claims and complaints are founded in justice, and your statements have convinced my understanding, though they have failed to gratify my pride. There are some intemperate persons among you, and all shall suffer for the folly of a part. Every word of your representations shall be watched and scanned with the most scrupulous severity; and if one indiscreet or intemperate expression is to be found, your claims, however just, must not expect the least attention." Really, observed the Hon. Gentleman, much as he respected the motives of those persons who opposed these claims on the ground of danger to Church and State, he could not extend his respect to those who, professing themselves friends to emancipation, gave such reason for now withdrawing their support.

If a different state of mind prevailed in Ireland, it would then be said, what! would you disturb the tranquillity of Ireland, by the proposal of a measure which is not called for?—all is peaceable there: no such measure is desired: and it would be the excess of impolicy now to make such a legislative provision. Thus, whether the feelings of the Irish be subdued or violent,—whether their language be reasonable or indiscreet,—whether their conduct be tranquil or turbulent, the question would always be answered by some unhandsome argument. (*Hear, hear.*)

Before he sat down, he wished to notice one observation of a Right Hon. Gentleman, who spoke last; he had asked, why the throne should not be Catholic? To this he would answer, because it was not expedient. It was expedient to admit Catholics to office, because it could be done with safety, for there would always be a Protestant majority in the House of Parliament; but the Throne could not be divided: and there being the alternative of Catholic and Protestant, the Protestant majority had a right to insist that the King should be a Protestant. He concluded by saying, that he regarded this question as the most important that had for years been agitated in Parliament; if it succeeded, he should rejoice that his humble efforts had not been wanting to its success: if it failed, he should console himself that he had anxiously and zealously afforded all the support which lay in his limited power. (*Hear.*)

Mr. CAREW expressed his concern that what he had to offer would scarcely authorise him to trespass upon the indulgence of the House, but as an Irishman by birth, by habit, and by affection, he could not but feel deeply interested in the happiness and tranquillity of his country. From every view he had been able to take of the subject, and from every experience which his residence in his native country might have afforded to him, he was most decidedly of opinion that there was no one measure so happily calculated as that which was under the consideration of the House to strengthen the resources of Great Britain, and to raise Ireland, without the slightest possible

danger to Protestant ascendancy there, or to the connexion of Church and State in England, to that rank in the scale of the British empire, to which her natural advantages, her approved loyalty, and her determined spirit to meet the common difficulties, and surmount the common dangers, entitled her. It would undeniably militate against the mutual interests of the two islands, that when every possible energy was required, when every means was to be called forth to enable the country to resist the common enemy, the right arm of the empire should be paralyzed by the preposterous incapacities under which the population of Ireland suffered. It was altogether ridiculous for Gentlemen to look for an equal zeal from Irishmen, unless Irishmen were animated by the feelings of an equal cause. It was altogether idle to expect an adequate effect from an inadequate cause. What, in fact, was the duty of the Legislature? That duty could be defined in a few words. Let the Catholics of Ireland be possessed but of a common cause, and of a common interest, and in the hour of danger, Ireland would be, of all other points, that less exposed to the consequences of attack—that most likely to triumph over the enemies of the empire—and, therefore, that completely invulnerable for the general good, the happiness, and security of the British empire. He might call the attention of the House to a variety of topics, but these topics had been eloquently and forcibly urged by other Gentlemen in the course of the discussions which had taken place on the present question. They had derived every aid, and every persuasion, from talents and patriotism which he had cause to venerate: and he should therefore content himself with assuring the House, that the question then before them had his cordial and unqualified support.

Mr. RYDER was ready to admit, that the time might arrive when the Roman Catholics should be allowed to exempt themselves from the thralldom under which they laboured by the authority of the Pope. The power of the Pope, in fact, extended not to religious points alone, but to all the important duties and rights of social life, and to the laws of the realm.

That power, if established, would destroy the temporal rights of the country. It had been objected, that the Clergy had taken a share in petitioning the Legislature against the Catholic claims; but he would put it fairly to the feelings and the judgment of the House, whether the Clergy did not possess and exercise a just right to interfere, when a question was brought forward, in which the vital interests of the national establishment were involved? To attack the Clergy upon that ground, was, in reality, to be guilty of that of which those persons who made the attack must have been conscious. He denied that not going into the Committee would shut the doors of the House against the claims of the Roman Catholics. The question had been discussed year after year, session after session, week after week, and day after day, and he would ask, what advantage could arise from entertaining the merits of the question in a Committee? Seeing, as he did, the Protestants of this country decidedly against, and adverse to the claims of the Roman Catholics, and the Roman Catholics themselves unwilling to grant the necessary securities, what was left to the House but to oppose these claims, and to support the present establishment unfettered and unimpaired? Although Mr. Pitt was friendly to the concessions required by the Catholics, he felt it his duty to oppose them in consequence of the general feeling and disposition of the country.

Mr. WELLESLEY POLE explained.

Mr. MARSH felt himself not desirous to trespass upon the indulgence of the House; but he could not remain silent, and witness, without a remark, the asperity of censure which had been thrown against the Clergy. He had a pride and pleasure in recollecting that a character truly illustrious, the Bishop of Norwich, was invulnerable to censures of that nature, and that the pious sentiments, liberality of demeanor, and the purity of life of that excellent Prelate exempted him from all attack of that kind. If any quality could peculiarly distinguish that great and eminent prelate, it was his generous devotion for, and enthusiastic spirit in the cause of civil and religious liberty.

The proposition which was then submitted for the House to go into a committee, was the only efficacious way of satisfying both the Catholics, and the scruples of those who objected to their claims. It was the only mode in which the question either could or ought to be considered. All the merits and demerits of the subject would be then fairly brought under the consideration of the House, which would be enabled to see and feel all the grand and leading points on both sides, without reviving animosities—without exciting prejudices—and without restoring those grounds of contention, the existence of which had caused so many serious and unhappy disputes. Gentlemen could, in that case, avail themselves of all the evidence which might be adduced; they could, and indeed had a right to expect, all the facts which it was possible to bring forward; and they would be enabled to treat them with a sobriety and calmness suitable to the importance and magnitude of the subject which called for their investigation and decision. Prejudices and passions, on either side, would not, in consequence of such a line of conduct, be allowed to possess any weight; and it should not of course be forgotten, that the imputed violence of the partizans of Catholic Emancipation, could not be urged as a proof of the badness of the cause they advocated.

Mr. PEELE explained, and disclaimed any improper allusion to the Bishop of Norwich.

Mr. WHITBREAD observed, on rising, that, although the subject, momentous as it was, had been discussed with extraordinary ability, and that the arguments for going into a Committee were peculiarly strong, yet there still appeared to him some points which had not been enforced in support of the question. While he felt happy in the opportunity thus afforded to him, of offering his tribute of admiration to the unbiassed abilities, and his unqualified veneration for the pure piety, of the Bishop of Norwich, he could not pass over the very able speech of the Right Hon. and Learned Gentleman (Mr. Plunkett) who had delivered his sentiments in support of the motion on a former night. That speech brought back

to his mind, and no doubt, he would add, to the recollection of the House, the golden times of Pitt, and Fox, and Burke, and Sheridan, and Windham. With respect to the Right Honourable Gentleman (Mr. W. Pole) who had in a speech, heard with great pleasure, attempted to shew his own consistency, he should merely say, that the Right Hon. Gentleman had not succeeded in imparting that degree of satisfaction which he intended. That Right Hon. Gentleman contended, that aye and no amounted to a decisive affirmative: and as he was himself consistent in giving an aye and aye, he felt it necessary to take every precaution, that these two affirmatives should not be construed in a way directly contrary, and urged against himself as an evidence of inconsistency. With respect to the Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Banks) who was at the head of economical reform, he would ask, what was his conduct, and how did he fulfil the duties on the present question, which he avowed to have contracted on other questions? Was he to stop short, and when his books and accounts were to be examined, was he to halt in his march, and carry them off under his arm? No! Such a conduct would be altogether unjustifiable. And yet the Hon. Gentleman, who, on subjects of economical reform, was ever ready to fulfil his duties in spite of all opposition from without and from within, was now prepared to change his whole system, to shift his whole plan of operations, to take up new ground, and to assure the House that no further inquiry was necessary, and that to go into the Committee would be a complete waste of time. He was persuaded, that the greatest misrepresentations had been resorted to; even by inflammatory addresses from the pulpit,—made, no doubt, in ignorance, or they would not have used them,—by papers circulated by the Society for the Propagation of Christianity,—and by every artifice to induce, or to force, people to sign petitions. Instead of a rooted feeling in this country against the Catholics, the people were more favourable by many degrees than on former occasions, and the cry of ‘No Popery’ would not succeed at this moment. It was in vain to attempt to take away Mr. Pitt’s

authority on this subject, notwithstanding what was attempted in the charge of a Reverend Prelate, even with the sentiments of Mr. Fox. That Reverend Prelate, if acting as a politician, had certainly a political game open to him ; and was not much to blame—except as a Prelate, in endeavouring to strip this question of the authority of Mr. Fox. For that purpose, in a note, he quoted a passage from a posthumous work of Mr. Fox ; but it was not fair in the Bishop to give a garbled extract to his Clergy, many of whom never had attended debates, and could not know the immutable principles of Mr. Fox on this question : principles in which Mr. Pitt coincided. When they were told, that Mr. Pitt never communicated his ideas on the subject to Lord Eldon, they might as well have been told, that he had no decided opinion on the Slave Trade, because he did not consult and agree with other Members of the Cabinet on the abolition of that nefarious traffic. Some friend of the Slave Trade might have said, that Mr. Pitt never had any digested plan of abolition, and thence argued, that he was not sincerely in favour of it ; but he (Mr. W.) would assert, that the divine effusions of eloquence which he had heard from him, rendered it impossible to doubt his sincerity. So, in this question, he would refer to Mr. Pitt's declarations, and to the paper which Lord Cornwallis left at Dublin, coupled with what his most intimate friends had said, for proofs of his real opinion. Thus, then, there were the opinions of Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, Mr. Burke, Mr. Windham, and of another, who was the boast of Ireland, one of whom she had always been, and always would be proud, as one of the most illustrious of her sons—Mr. Sheridan. The ground of opposition to these claims was a soil so rank, that when you cut down the weeds they sprung up again directly, and there was no end to efforts : just as it was during the exertions of twenty years, crowned at last with the abolition of the Slave Trade ; he hoped yet to see, as in that case, the blessed day when we could say, we had conciliated Ireland. One Gentleman said, after eight years deliberation, that he was not averse

to concessions, but to going into a Committee. A Committee was the only mode of giving the matter full consideration. Was it thought that the annual speech of his eloquent and venerable Friend (Mr. Grattan), answered by some Gentleman on the other side, was enough to content Ireland? Many of the counter-petitions, and some of the counter-speeches, were imbued with the old errors respecting Popery, yet the greater part looked to some convenient time. The Bishop of Lincoln, however, laid it down solemnly, that not only Popery was to be discouraged, but also, that any opinion which diminished the force of the conviction of men's minds against it, thereby weakening the Church of England, was to be equally opposed. Was not this an erroneous mode; and did it not tend to exciting the re-enactment of the severest excluding statutes against Catholics? One Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Yorke) had said, "shew me the securities, and I will go to a Committee;" but he was immediately afterwards carried away, and like the man who had just touched Heaven in the poetic description, was set off again by the winds, and driven to the limbo, where he contemplated cowls, and beads, and bulls, and indulgences. If he could not convince himself, no mortal power could. In some events the Right Hon. Gentleman would agree: one was, the death of Bonaparte. He (Mr. W.) did not attribute to him the wish to see Bonaparte taken off by unfair means; but he was surprised to see in public prints of respectability, horrible doctrines advanced, such as the necessity of marching to peace over the dead body of that man. He, for one, should solemnly object to the deep damnation of the taking off of any man by unfair means. That man was under the order of that Providence which had permitted his elevation to what he now was; but if the Catholics were to wait for this supposed event, he feared that their expectations might long be hopeless. Another event, was the giving up, by the Catholics, of the papal supremacy. Last year the Right Honorable Gentleman wanted a Pope at Ballyshannon; but this year the whole supremacy must be surrendered. If there was any

thing peculiarly taunting, and likely to provoke sufferers to madness, it was to fix on them a condition impossible to perform. This was the dreadful mode employed towards the unhappy victims, tortured by the rack of the Inquisition in order to extort from them confessions of crimes of which they were innocent. To the holiest of the Martyrs it may have been said, "only declare your disbelief of certain doctrines:" to Servetus; "Only say you believe in the Trinity;" and so of all other sufferers. They were all foolish people, and their sufferings were all their own fault. The expiring man might say, "I may be released from my agonies; but exquisite as my torments are, I will not consent to be relieved from temporary misery, at the expense of eternal punishments." We say to the Catholic, "You may be a Judge, a General, an Admiral, a Commander in chief: if you don't the fault is your own. Why don't you renounce your Creed?" But the answer was ready:—"What shall a man give in exchange for his soul? I shew you that I do give you security. My forefathers and my brethren have proved it by shedding their blood in your service. I myself am now marching to the perils of war to risk my life in your cause. You cannot be sincere in an offer coupled with such conditions; but I must be left in despair!" (*Hear.*) Popery had prevailed in Ireland from the earliest periods. When were the times, wherein the charges of the dissolution of marriages, bastardizing issues, and changing the course of landed property by the Pope, could be substantiated? When did he absolve our soldiers and sailors from their allegiance; and direct his priests to order them to desert and turn their weapons against our own bosoms? Gentlemen spoke of the Papal influence, as if the concessions were to create it; whereas the Hierarchy had, in fact, existed all along over a vast and discontented multitude; whereas the passing of the measure would continue it over a comparatively contented and happy population. (*Hear.*) One Gentleman went back to the time when all Ulster was given up to Protestants; but if that Gentleman had been a Catholic, where would he have been now, with all his

talents and cultivation? he would have remained, to use the quotation that had been employed, like one of "those lumps of marle, which encumbered the ground, but were incapable of fertilizing it." (*Hear.*) He was surprized at a gallant officer's laying so much stress on a petition from Fermanagh, on account of its numerous signatures; he who had fought and bled in Egypt, leading on Catholic soldiers, whose conduct and loyalty he had praised, as well as another gallant Officer, who said that their conduct was an honour to the army, and who, at their head, received that wound in his country's service which distinguished him. That officer had also had the opportunity of knowing the late worthy Pontiff, Pius the 6th, having commanded our dragoons, who formed his guard at Rome, and having received from him distinguished honour. A small petition from the descendants of the French Refugees still more surprised him. They had never before shewn such imprudence. Now, not perceiving the signs of the times, and how persecution would apply to all religions, they petitioned against concession, and even underlined the words "*all and every.*" For the honour of human nature, this petition ought not to have been presented. They ought to have known the dreadful effects of persecution, which weakened the French Monarchy, and shed oceans of human blood, through the bigotry of Louis XIV. A worthy Alderman (Curtis) said, concerning his larger petition, that every man had a right to express his opinion. Very true: but did not a petition somewhat larger than that, some years back, set the four corners of London in flames? False and detestable hand-bills were circulated, even at the doors of that House, pretending to be the opinions of a Catholic, that Mr. Grattan was insincere, and that what was proposed would be an insult to the Catholic Body. Such measures, like "the third part of the penal statutes," were disgraceful. In the new Protestant Association he lamented to see the name of an amiable, benevolent, and worthy man (Mr. Granville Sharpe) who had lived a long life of virtue and piety, and who had doubtless the best intentions. Yet his objections really

did not stand on the Coronation Oath, and such matters; but on his reading of the Apocalypse, wherein he had found, that if the Catholics were admitted, the wrath of God would be poured down on this kingdom! (*Hear.*) The thing was done already by admitting the principle. A story was circulated by the new society, of an Irish girl, who being asked whether she thought the Priest was like a God, answered, "He is like a God to me!" (*Hear.*) Were these absurdities fit to be disseminated! The securities were in our own hands: we took all away, and doled back little by little. What was retained was of great importance, but we should be more secure by restoring them. The Church of England would not fall but by its own neglect. Go into a Committee, and they might find Catholics more reasonable than they supposed. They might have conceded the veto on a former year, but time changed things; and what would be yielded to at one moment, would be spurned at on another occasion. It was not impossible that even the veto might yet be given up. The Catholics originally, and since the reformation, had all the privileges of other subjects, and it was the policy and duty of Parliament now to restore them. Mr. W. then noticed some articles in "The Hue and Cry," under the date of February the 6th, respecting the fire at Sydney College, Cambridge, in which, after noticing the diabolical nature of the crime, it was observed, that it must not be suspected that there were any *Romanists* about the College: another article alluded to the Popish struggle for dominion, which, it said, occupied so much of the newspapers, and which had become an absolute nuisance, and ought to be put an end to. He wished to know, what the Under Secretary of State for the Home Department would say to such articles in that publication? (*Hear.*) Was this the way to conciliate affection, and procure good will? One might almost think, on reading such things, that one lived in the time of Oates's conspiracy. The writer of them was a fit man to have written the inscription on the Monument, which,

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"..... Pointing to the skies,
"Like a tall bully, lifts its head, and lies."

Convinced he was, that whenever it was known that the Court favour shone on the Catholic claims the passing of the measure would be quite as easy as that of the Toleration Bill last year. Then, he was sure that the Church would readily acquiesce. To use the expression of an Hon. Baronet early in the debate, those with mitres *on* their heads, and those with mitres *in* their heads, would take quite a different course from that which they had pursued: for even those who had mitres *on* their heads could have them improved by translation. If Court favour ran now, as it was expected to do, the thing would soon be done. The Church had taken some unjustifiable means of opposition. He had heard of an Archdeacon sending to his apparitor to procure his signature, or to receive his dismissal. A man who valued this world's goods dared not refuse. The dignity was supposed, some years ago, to entertain very different sentiments. If the cause of the Catholics was now to be destroyed, would they not look back to the promises which had been held out to them? Who was it that offered them the cup of expectation? Who tempted them to the intoxication? Who was it that had disappointed all their hopes? (*Hear.*) He trusted that the House would take care they should not be deceived or disappointed: but that it would nobly follow up that resolution to which it agreed by such a majority last year. There was, he supposed, no Royal Conscience now standing in the way of the claimants; and if nothing in the nature of a Royal Conscience existed to obstruct them, and if that fact were well known, he was convinced that the worthy Alderman (Curtis) would not be burthened, as he had been, with his enormous Petitions. Such Petitions, indeed, would not appear. By the Committee's entering upon this great and good work, all the labours of his respected Friend (Mr. Grattan) would at length be consummated. The Catholic subjects might be admitted to all places of power and honour, save the Throne, which must be filled by a Protestant Prince, as the supreme head of our Protestant Church Establishment, and for the security of the whole tenour of our laws. The Church of England would derive additional security and safety

in the additional security and safety of the Empire at large; and would be allowed a time of respite and repose from the pursuits she had lately been engaged in, and for her devotion to her real and Christian duties: Ireland would become satisfied and contented, and this whole Empire would be rendered united, strong, and secure.

The Hon. F. ROBINSON expressed some diffidence in rising upon a question in which so many Gentlemen much superior to himself were anxious to deliver their opinions. This, however, had always appeared to him a question in which magnificence of declamation, exuberance of wit, and vehemence of invective, were unnecessary. He had last year assented to the motion that had been made, and he should now assent to the present motion. He had defended it before, as he should defend it now, on the ground that the question had come to such a shape and point, that it was necessary to take it into serious consideration. They had been long debating on abstract proposition, and he thought the time had come for discussing the specific remedy. If he thought the remedy proposed would be only satisfactory to one party, he should not support it. He allowed that nothing could be less conciliatory than the language of the Catholic Board; but their language was of the same sort last year, when he agreed to the motion. As to the Petitions from this country, he had never supposed that this country would be indifferent to a point of such great importance; and he must allow that a number of Petitions so respectably signed, were entitled to very great weight. Those Petitions, however, went no farther than to call upon the House to provide sufficient securities and safeguards for the Constitution; and in this part of their prayer, he and almost every man would be ready to coincide with them. Several petitions had proceeded from the Clergy, which he thought were also entitled to the greatest respect. The Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Whitbread) had passed a very high encomium upon a phrase which an Hon. Baronet (Sir Robert Heron) had used, in the fervour of maiden oratory, of Clergymen

in their heads." This phrase appeared to him to be so far from deserving the high encomiums that the Hon. Gentleman had pronounced, that it appeared to him a gross calumny on that respectable body who signed those petitions. Without comparing the state of the Catholic mind this year with what it was last year, he must say, and he thought almost every body must allow, that a very great change had taken place since the time that those restrictions and disabilities were considered necessary by our ancestors. What might, therefore, have been necessary in former times, did not appear to him to be on that account necessary at present. Now it was perfectly known and established that the Throne is Protestant; whereas, formerly the Catholics naturally looked to the probability of the succeeding Monarch being a Catholic, and favouring their views. It was therefore not surprising, on the contrary, it was very natural, that the founders of the revolution should not only have declared that the Throne should be Protestant, but that those who approached it should be Protestants also. It was also to be recollected, that there were then pretenders to the Crown, which we have not at the present day. Although he intended voting for the House to go into a Committee, to take those claims into consideration, yet if he supposed that nothing would be proposed in the Committee beyond the Resolution of the Right Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Grattan), he should not support it. He was not surprised at many feeling an apprehension of danger from the Catholics. In fact, our Constitution was full of jealousy; it was jealous of the Crown, jealous of the aristocracy, and jealous of democracy, it was therefore by no means wonderful if there should be a jealousy of Catholics also. This proper jealousy, however, should by no means be carried so far as to prevent any of them filling their just and proper rank in the State. He was, therefore, now fully prepared to go into the Committee with a strong hope of realizing all those objects which had been stated last year in the Resolution which the House had adopted on the motion of a Right Hon. Gentleman.

Sir T. ACLAND, in a maiden speech, observed, that the question was not about leaving our Constitution in Church and State without securities, but whether, in the room of the securities now existing, others might not be substituted that were as free from danger and less objectionable. If no real good were to be expected from the House going into a Committee, he should not vote for it. He believed, however, that it would not be difficult to find other securities, which would remove the danger apprehended. As to the effectual preservation and guard of the Protestant Church, he thought it almost as necessary as the preservation of our Monarchy and of our liberties. In the laws which were passed at the time of the Union between England and Scotland, there was an express reservation of the power of Parliament to alter the provisions of those enactments, if they thought proper. He could not avoid recollecting, that many of the greatest Statesmen of our age, however they differed on other points of policy, were agreed on this, that there was a possibility of making a safe arrangement of the Catholic claims, without danger to the present constitution. Last year it had appeared to the majority of the House, that the time was come for taking into consideration those Catholic petitions. He was a new Member of that House, but he considered the resolution of the House last Session to be a legacy which the present Parliament should be anxious to ratify and confirm. He could certainly have wished that the foundation of freedom to the Catholics had been gradually and silently laid, in such a manner as would have afforded effectual security. Among a number of arguments which he could bring to shew an alteration of late years in the Catholic mind, he must observe that Catholics in Ireland frequently sent their children to be educated by Protestant Clergymen. He would also mention the great increase, of late years, of Roman Catholics as students in the college of Dublin. He had spent some short time in Ireland, and among the many hospitalities he received there, he was at the house of a Protestant Gentleman, where the Catholic servants came up without scruple, and with the per-

mission of their titular Bishop, to join in the general family worship, which was taken from the liturgy of the Church of England. He considered that their conduct was, in every situation of life, such as to induce the House to remove the remaining penalties and disabilities under which they now labour.

Sir T. SUTTON spoke for some time; but the lowness of his voice, and the noise which was then making in the House, prevented us from hearing the speech. We understood him, however, to be against the Claims of the Catholics.

Lord PALMERSTON could not suppress his anxiety on the present occasion, to give something more than a silent vote upon this question. Although he was free to confess, that the vote of the last Parliament was by no means binding upon the present, yet he saw nothing to make him think that the present Parliament would differ materially from the vote that had been given in the last. At the time that vote had been given, the resolutions of the Catholic Board had been full as violent as they have since been; and yet the House thought at that time, that it would be beneath its dignity to alter the course that they were then prepared to take, merely on account of some intemperate expressions used by the Catholics. He was extremely glad, that they had not at this time come forward with any claim of right, as that was a thing which he never could admit. He never would allow, that the Legislature had not at all times the right to make such enactments as in its judgment were most conducive to the public good. Not allowing, however, that the Catholics could justly found a claim of right, yet he would say, that it appeared to him highly expedient, that many of the restrictions under which the Catholics laboured should be done away. Restrictions of this nature were not the rule of the Constitution, but an exception to the rule; and it was as necessary for those who contended for the continuance of the restrictions, to shew that they are necessary at the present time, as it was for those who first laid them on, to shew that they were then necessary. He conceived that no sufficient case had been made out for the continuance of those restrictions, and that no

serious danger could be apprehended to the army or the navy from allowing to Catholic Officers their fair chance of promotion in both those services. On what ground could any man say, that it was safe to entrust the Catholic officer with the command of a regiment, but that it was not safe to trust him with the command of a brigade? He thought that it would be an idle waste of words to attempt to refute the objections made to Catholic officers being allowed to aspire to the same promotion as other men. He thought that no man could seriously or rationally apprehend danger on this point. The great stand, however, would, as he apprehended, be made against their admission into Parliament. If, however, they were admitted, the number of them who would be introduced into the other House of Parliament, would be so very small, that he conceived it impossible for them in that House to produce any material change. As for the Catholics who might come into that House, it was his firm opinion that they would act exactly in the same way as Protestant Gentlemen, and range themselves under different parties, according to their different feelings and views of politics. He could not conceive how they could get any great influence in a House where they would form so considerable a minority, unless they were to bargain or coalesce with some great Protestant party. He could hardly believe that any large Protestant party could ever be found in that House who would join them in subverting the Constitution; but supposing all this to take place, there would still remain a Protestant King, and House of Peers, almost entirely Protestant, and an indignant people who would protect the Constitution and the country from any danger with which it could be threatened. (*Hear.*) He believed that if the Catholics had used a more conciliatory language, their cause would have been now much forwarder than it is. He did not think, however, that that consideration should interfere with the legislative wisdom of the House. He even thought that the long exclusion of the Catholics from situations to which other men might aspire, had a tendency to produce a constantly

increasing irritation ; as it might often happen, that the same ambition, which, if allowed to flow in its regular and natural channel, would be found exerting itself in the service of the country, would, if not permitted to flow in that way, induce men to aspire to the distinction of being leaders of party. He therefore thought that it would be much better that the ambition of the Catholic gentry should be directed in its proper and natural course, than to have it diverted from that course by unnecessary restrictions. He should therefore vote for going into the Committee ; and although he had the strongest wish that something might be there suggested which would be conciliatory to the Catholics, without at all endangering the Established Church or the State, yet he did not hold himself pledged to adopt the particular resolution stated by a Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Grattan). He should go into the Committee unfettered by any pledge, and he hoped that great advantage would be derived from taking the subject into their serious consideration.

Mr. HART DAVIS, jun. spoke shortly against going into a Committee. He warned the House to be cautious how they acceded to such a measure, as they would find it, when in the Committee, very difficult to make a retreat from it ; and he was convinced the Right Hon. Gentlemen who supported the measure would not be able to provide such securities as would be satisfactory to the House and to the country.

Mr. H. LASCELLES said, he thought the question of great importance. He would be as ready as any man to relieve the Catholics from any of the grievances they complained of, where it could be done with safety ; but he thought they ought specifically to point out the particular grievance, and what concessions would be considered by them as an actual relief. He thought also, that they should give such securities as would satisfy the House and the country. He hoped he should not be deemed illiberal, in mentioning these cautions ; but in his opinion, the case required that the House should know

what was actually expected, before they held out hopes of redress, which might afterwards be disappointed.

Mr. PONSONBY moved an Adjournment, and mentioned as his reason, the evident indisposition of the SPEAKER.

Adjourned.

FOURTH DAY.

March 2d, 1813.

On the motion of Sir H. PARNELL, the debate was resumed.

The Hon. Baronet began by observing, that the Speech of a Right Hon. Gentleman, lately Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. W. Pole), was not less important for its candour and sincerity, than for the weight it must have with the House, as he was a most competent witness on the subject of Irish affairs, and thoroughly qualified to give his opinion as to the facts involved in the present question. The Right Hon. Gentleman had truly said, that the lower classes of Catholics felt interested in the discussion, and that the opinion of the Protestants in Ireland was decidedly favourable to their claims : but what was more important still, he had truly stated that the Catholic Body had now acquired so much knowledge and wealth, that it was impossible they could remain as they were ;—their claims must either be granted, or you must re-enact the penal laws, and prepare for a rebellion in Ireland. A Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Ryder) had, last night, asserted, that the Anti-Catholic petitions were signed by a considerable majority of the Protestants of this country. He (Sir H. P.) would deny the fact and from

examination, was prepared to assert, that in only three English counties assembled by public requisition were Petitions carried; while in not fewer than twenty counties, there had been no petitions from the Laity, and in Scotland there had been none at all. The adverse party, then, formed only a small part of the Protestant community. A Right Rev. Prelate (the Bishop of Lincoln) had, however, considered the Church in so much danger, that he had delivered a charge to his Clergy, which might rather be called a bad political pamphlet, than a good religious charge. It charged the rebellion of 1798 on the Catholics; thus throwing an imputation on the whole body, which would be libellous if applied to any one individual. If it formed the gravamen of libel, that it tended to disturb the public peace, surely such an indiscriminate attack had more of the essence of libel in it, than any attack upon a private person. Indeed, he was of opinion that the pamphlet in question, as it ascribed treasonable practices to the whole Catholic body, would very properly form the subject of a distinct charge in that House. But he had to notice a petition from Huddersfield, to which the name of a Rev. Mr. Coates was attached, and the language of which was still more reprehensible. It charged the Catholics with considering it as a meritorious act to murder and destroy Heretics. An imputation so foul deserved to be censured by Parliament, were it not at the same time so false and foolish as to deserve very little attention. If it were established as a rule of evidence, that scraps of pamphlets and paragraphs of newspapers were to be admitted, he must give up the question; but if the solemn decisions of foreign universities were to be considered of weight, all must concur with him in opinion. A Right Hon. Gentleman had stated that there were great difficulties as to marriages in Ireland; but this was a mistake. The marriage of Catholics by Catholic priests had never been questioned. The oath of the Irish Catholic Bishops was not incompatible with their loyalty. The oath they had formerly taken had been objected to, as containing intolerant dogmas; but on the representation of the Irish Catholic Bishops, Pope Pius VI. agreed to their adopting the oath used in

Russia, which omits all those objectionable particles. He would rebut the charge of intolerance, made upon the Roman Catholics, by one historical fact, When a Bill was proposed, in the year 1641, for restoring the Bishops, twenty-one Catholic Noblemen voted for that Bill. It had been stated in the debates on this subject, that the scholars at Maynooth College learned in their class-books, all the objectionable doctrines; but his Right Hon. Friend had read, from those very books, a denial of the temporal power of the Pope; and Mr. Perceval, having made the same assertion formerly, had allowed that he had been in error. Gothard, a writer of great authority among the Catholics, had laid it down, that any person who worshipped images was guilty of idolatry, and ought to be cursed; that all persons who believed that saints could be redeemers,—that priests can forgive sins,—that the Pope had authority to empower persons to commit sins, or grant a dispensation to lie,—ought to be accursed. That those who believed such doctrines, or who did not hold them in equal detestation with those who charged them with holding them, ought to be cursed. Mr. Perceval, in his last speech on the subject, said, it was very strange if the Catholics had abjured those doctrines, that the Irish Catholic Bishops had never publicly declared their assent. The Irish Catholic Bishops had, in November last, declared, that the answers of the six foreign Universities were conformable to the doctrines of their Church. It had been also stated by the same Right Honourable Gentleman, that none of the Popes had abjured those doctrines; but there had been a declaration from the Court of Cardinals, sanctioned by Pope Pius the VIth, that the doctrine “that faith ought not to be kept with heretics, or that the lives of Princes might be attempted, under the pretence of religion,” were erroneous and damnable. It had also been stated, that the Corporation and Test Acts were fundamental principles of the Constitution; and the Reverend Bishop of Lincoln had cited the works of Mr. Fox, to prove that such were his opinions; but the opinions of that great Statesman were the reverse. He had also cited

Mr. Justice Blackstone, as supporting the same opinion; but that Learned Judge spoke of the Church, and not of the Constitution. It had also been made a charge, that the rebellion in 1798 was a Roman Catholic rebellion. To refute the charge it was only necessary to read the Reports of the Irish House of Commons, drawn up, he believed by the Noble Lord opposite. That rebellion, had it commenced one year before, would have been confined to the Protestants of the North. The Irish Catholic Bishops had made every exertion to put down that rebellion; no beneficed Catholic clergyman was engaged in that rebellion, and very few of any other description. Of the twenty-four persons who were sent to Fort St. George, only three were Roman Catholics. He hoped he had established, that the petitions which lay on their table did not speak the sentiments of the people; and that the House would grant the prayer of the Roman Catholics.

Mr. WILBRAHAM BOOTLE objected to going into a Committee, as he did not see what advantage it could be productive of; but whenever a specific Bill was introduced, he should be happy to give it his support, if he thought it could be done with safety to the Constitution.

Sir WILLIAM SCOTT admitted, that when necessity was pleaded as the ground for excluding the Catholics, the necessity ought to be of a grave and serious kind, arising from a well-founded, not a chimerical apprehension of danger to the Established Church. It was allowed on all hands that the Established Church must be protected. (*Hear, hear.*) Now he could not agree with those who said there was no danger to the Church from acceding to the claims of the Catholics. He would not say that the exclusive catalogue might not be too large. Something perhaps might be struck out of it; but for that purpose the subject must be brought before Parliament in a different way. His opinion was, that the Catholics could not, with safety to the Constitution and the Established Church, be admitted to judicial offices, where matters connected with the Established Church might

come in question ; nor to high political offices, where they might have to legislate for the established church. He would ask any one who had a son or a brother in the church, or was himself nearly connected with it, whether he could contemplate without anxiety the possibility of seeing a Catholic chancellor or a Catholic Master of the Rolls, deciding upon matters relative to the church. Could they see, without apprehension, the keeping of the King's conscience, and the jurisdiction in Appeals concerning Ecclesiastical matters committed to a Roman Catholic ? Could they see without alarm, Roman Catholics in the Privy Council, deciding upon the religious and ecclesiastical questions, which might come under the review of that Body ? As to seats in Parliament, even the great advocate of the Catholic claims appeared to admit, that this would be attended with a considerable degree of danger ; for he did not deny that mischief would follow from such a plan, but only contended, that there would be an antidote to the evil ; that the mischief would be so much diluted by the superiority of the Protestants, in point of number, that the particles would be so imperceptible in the mass of the body of that House, that no pernicious consequences would follow. He could not, however, admit the accuracy of the calculation, even in regard to the numbers. The Catholic Noblemen and Gentlemen of whom he wished to speak with all possible respect, had great influence in their neighbourhood ; and that influence would, no doubt, be exerted to the utmost to give them weight and consequence in the Legislature. Under these circumstances, it was not surprising that the Protestants, and especially the Clergy, were alarmed ; and he thought that Rev. Body had been observed upon with shameful rudeness and disrespect in that House, for no other reason that he could perceive, except that they thought proper to use their influence, and to petition the Legislature in defence of their religion. (*Loud cries of hear, hear.*) That there was a principle of hostility to the establishment, or rather, not to use a harsh term, that there was some-

thing unfriendly to the established religion in the religion of the church of Rome, he considered as clear from the very nature of the Catholic religion itself. Those who believed that eternal happiness was not to be obtained out of the pale of their own church, must wish to have that church established by law. Here he read an extract from a pamphlet (from the low tone in which he spoke, we could not hear by whom he stated it to be written), by which it appeared, that some time ago a proposition had been made, or an expectation entertained, that the Catholic and Protestant clergy should have the alternate use and enjoyment of the churches. If these were their expressions when they had but little power, what would their language be when they should have obtained all they asked? The opinions of the Irish Catholics were more rigidly Roman Catholics than they were even in Roman Catholic countries. In those countries where the Governments were Catholic, the people were disposed; when disputes arose between them and the Pope, rather to range themselves on the side of the Governments; and the opinions of the Pope came to the people through the strainer of Government, if he might use the expression. Hence the liberties of the Gallican Church in France. But the Irish Catholics were directly and immediately connected with the Pope, and much more under his influence, both as to matters of faith and practice. What, then, were the opinions of the Pope? He would not go back to old records, but take the opinions of the present Pope, on the subject of religious toleration. In a pastoral letter, published in 1808, the Pope stated, that those who were so indifferent to all religion as to suppose, that other sects might be supported or allowed to exist along with the Catholic religion, must believe that Christ might be united with Belial,—light with darkness,—piety with impiety. And in a second pastoral letter, of the same year, his Holiness stated, that to allow the forms and ceremonies of any other religion than those of the Catholic to be publicly exercised, was contrary to the Catholic religion, and the good of the State. That in recognizing all sects, the

Government did not show a proper respect to the laws of the Catholic Church, and that this was a persecution of the Church of Christ, out of the pale of which there was no hope of salvation. When such were the opinions of the Catholics on the subject of toleration, was it possible that any one, in the darkness of that religion, should not attempt to re-establish it in all its splendour and pre-eminence, if he had the power to do so? It had been said, that the Catholics disclaimed these sentiments; but he had heard no such disclaimer. He did not blame the Roman Catholic Clergy; they acted, no doubt, like conscientious men in obeying the Pope, who taught them these doctrines. It might be alledged, perhaps, that the Laity did not hold these opinions. That there might be some Catholics, of excellent education and understanding, who might hold different opinions, he was not disposed to deny; but then it was obvious, that the mass of the Catholics would follow the opinions of their Pastors. What the opinions of the Pope were, which the Pastors would of course adopt, he had already stated, as far as regarded the subject of toleration,—opinions not promulgated ages ago, but given at the moment; and as the Irish Catholics were so nearly and immediately connected with the Pope, would it not be highly dangerous to admit them to political power? The fair statement of the question was this: “We cannot vest you with authority to judge and legislate in regard to our establishment, which you hold to be sinful and mischievous. We admit that your ambition is fair—that your talents would be useful; but we must defend ourselves, and this is our only reason for excluding you from political and judicial power.” But it might be said, that this was casting an unjust imputation on the Catholics. He denied that there was any unjust imputation: it was no more than a fair deduction from their own religious tenets. The arguments were such as a Roman Catholic Government might very properly use in regard to Protestants. The appointment of the Protestant Neekar, to the high office which he held in France, was in no slight degree the cause of these miseries, which in the course of

the French Revolution had been experienced by France and other nations. It might be argued, that the Catholic would be restrained, by oaths, from doing any thing hostile to the Protestant Establishment. He was apprehensive, however, that in many instances, principle and prejudice might be too much for the oath. Adopting the Phrase of a Noble Lord (Bristol, we think he said) in speaking of the Test Act, he might say, that there would be a political conscience on one side, and a Catholic conscience on the other ; and they could not be certain that the latter might not prevail, on many important occasions. Adverting next to the subject of securities, he said, that these had been all rejected by the Catholics with indignation. The Veto had been refused, as had the domestic nomination. He had prophesied that it would be so, somewhat like Cassandra, for he did not at the time obtain much credit. Indeed, the nomination or appointment by the Pope appeared to be a vital part of the Roman Catholic religion. No appointment of a Bishop, or a Priest,—no administration of the sacrament,—was valid without his confirmation or authority, in some manner exercised. It had been honestly said, by the Catholics, that to serve an ejection on the Pope in these respects, was to strike at the foundation of their religion. It had been alleged, that the intemperate expressions ascribed to some of the Catholics were not sanctioned by the body. His answer to this was, that he had never heard that language disclaimed by the body of the Catholics ; and if that body really disclaimed it, they acted very unfairly towards Parliament, in leaving it to infer from their silence, that they adopted that language. What, then, could they gain by going into a Committee ? The Catholics refused securities, at a time when security was most necessary. The Pope was at present the *protégé* and slave of Buonaparte ; he was chained down to a residence in France, and the man was a slave *qui non potest ire quo vult* : his orders might not be those of the Pope, but those of Buonaparte ; and the craft of that subtle and dangerous tyrant ought to be met by

every act of caution on our part. But then it had been argued, that in other countries,—not small countries like Switzerland, but extensive kingdoms,—the Roman Catholic and Protestant religions were publicly acknowledged, and existed in harmony together. In such countries, however, the Established Religion was no part of the Constitution as in this country, or otherwise the States were despotic; and there the evils arising from such a situation of things might be more easily prevented or remedied. But if with a constitution such as that of the British dominions, you admitted the Roman Catholics of Ireland, a country where the majority of the people was Catholic, to a share in the political power, there could be little doubt how in a few years the minority would be disposed of. (*Hear, hear.*) It had been said, that the removal of disabilities would remove animosity. That he doubted:—he was rather inclined to think that it would rather kindle than extinguish animosity. Equal power would only inflame the contests between the parties. This had been the effect of such proceedings in other countries. It had been the effect of the famous edict of Nantz, which had been so often adverted to on the other side. The disputes of the two parties had only assumed a fiercer character in consequence of that edict. The only mode of preserving peace and good order, was to secure the ascendancy of the one, and to tolerate the other, without admitting it to any political power. He saw no prospect of conciliation from granting the Catholic claims. The petitions on the table proved, that the Protestants of England and Ireland felt a strong anxiety on this subject. These were the petitions, not of the rabble, but of the middle ranks, who were capable of judging of the nature of the question. If the Catholics refused securities, nothing could be done with satisfaction to the Protestants. Where, then, was the use of going into a Committee? The Catholics said they considered securities as insults, injuries, and persecutions: and would they think them less so from being put in the black letter of an act of Parliament? Why this exa-

mination *de bene esse*—this idle parade of conciliation which must end in nothing? If the Catholics complained of specific grievances, let them bring them before the House, with the means by which they proposed to remedy them; and let them apply in a different tone, and temper. He did not know but some further relaxations might be made; but they ought not to open a wholesale shop of grievances. If they were to do so, they might be supplied, no doubt, with plenty of fashionable articles of that kind from Ireland. Why had not the Right Honourable Gentleman (Canning) under the Gallery, come forward with his *panacea* on this subject, instead of waiting till so late an hour before he displayed his great talents in enlightening the House on the question? At present the House was in the dark, in absolute obscurity. What were they to do when they went into the Committee—*cui bono*—for what end or purpose were they to adopt this mode of proceeding? No one had been able to give any distinct information on that subject, and they were left to fish in the dark. They were to go into a Committee without any knowledge of what they were to do there, in hopes that they might get they knew not what information, from they knew not whom. In such a state of things he could see no reason for going into a Committee, and should therefore certainly vote against the proposition.

LORD CASTLEREAGH said, it was with great pain and distrust in his own individual judgment, that he felt himself, on the present occasion, compelled to differ from those with whom he usually acted; but a sense of duty alone would influence his vote that night. He never felt less prone to suffer personal considerations to enter into a discussion of a great public question, conducted as it had been throughout, with the utmost moderation and temper: he hoped, therefore, that if he held himself bound to repel an accusation brought against him by an Honourable and Learned Gentleman, (Mr. Plunkett) on a preceding evening, that Gentleman would impute the answer to the sincere respect which he (Lord C.) thought due to

every thing which fell from so eminent a person. It was charged to him as a fault, that holding the opinions which he held on this subject, he consented to form part of an Administration, whose understood principle, upon their accession to office, was to resist the Catholic claims. He must say in answer to this charge, that so far from feeling it to be disadvantageous to the empire that the controul of Government should be withheld from this measure, he most decidedly thought that it ought to be above all others entirely free from party struggle. (*Hear.*) If it could not be carried by the cordial unbiassed wishes of all parties,—if it were not exempt from all influence except its own principle, and the deliberate judgment of the represented Commons of England,—it could never be a blessing to the nation. (*Hear.*)

The Hon. and Learned Gentleman (whose talents excited the highest admiration, and whose convincing speech could never be forgot) might easily call to his recollection, whether it was a taste for office or a sense of duty which induced the present Administration some time ago to remain in power. He might also recollect, that the present was not the first administration which had been divided on this very subject: that of which the Hon. Gentleman formed so distinguished a part, it was well known, was so constituted, that the only Catholic measure in which the persons in that Cabinet could concur, was that Bill which they afterwards abandoned; consenting to remain in office, and holding themselves entitled to give individual opinions, instead of the united weight of Government, on this very same proposition, which was now before the House. As to the measure itself, his opinion was decidedly in favour of it, as it had been last Session. (*Hear.*) Though he had been called upon by his Right Hon. Friend, he did not think himself bound to originate any specific plan: he confessed that he saw almost insurmountable difficulties to the accomplishment of the proposed object: yet he did not feel the less inclined cordially to embark in the proposition which had been made last year by one Right Hon. Gentleman, and this year by another Right Hon. Gentleman, because he was willing,

though he could not see his way himself, to follow the views of others, who might be able to effect that which was not obvious to his own mind. (*hear, hear.*) It was evidently the prevailing sense of the House last Sessions, that a Committee should be appointed, that it might be ascertained what were the precise difficulties of this important question; what were the obstacles which caused it to stand still; and whether and how far those impediments could be removed? Then, as now, he was himself determined, never to assent to any proposition which should not secure the established religion; but he must say, that when he compared the present situation of affairs with the state of things at that time, he could see no substantive changes since the last year which should induce the House to come to a different decision. (*Hear.*) As to the temper evinced by the Catholics (which he lamented as tending to the destruction of their own hopes), what feelings were now expressed by that body, which had not appeared last year? The situation of the Pope was not effectually altered; and the opinion of the Catholic Bishops, as to the operation of his confinement, was given so far back as in November, 1809. All these obstacles were, therefore, in as full force in the last year, as they were now. Why, then, it would be asked, did he then consent to the proposition of the Right Honourable Gentleman? for this reason—because, though his own understanding did not furnish him with the means of seeing his way through the opposing difficulties, yet he thought it a subject becoming the united wisdom of Parliament to investigate and determine.

It was said, that there had been, in the course of the year, a great change in public opinion: he differed with those who thought so. But if it were so, he should think this an additional reason for a full and impartial discussion. For himself, he could not collect from the public temper expressed in the Petitions, that the people would be averse from Catholic concession, provided the measure should be accompanied with proper regulations, and the Catholic tone were less violent and intemperate. It was certainly

true, that a very respectable number of Protestants, both in England and Ireland, had a general dislike to the measure ; yet this was by no means the universal or the more prevailing opinion. There were, indeed, strong feelings on this subject among the great mass of the population ; yet those prejudices were so softened and altered, that had the Catholics assumed a milder language, the country would have felt a very different disposition. As proof of this, he would refer, as well to the tenor of most of the petitions, as to the tone of moderation and temper which had pervaded the debate. He would now offer a few remarks on one or two views of this subject, as taken by other persons. As to the declaration of the Catholics, that all regulations would be mockeries and he felt insults, that he should be acting a contemptible part, if he held out to them the prospect of desired privileges on condition, which as men of honour, or in decorous consistency to the faith of their ancestors, they could not conscientiously accept. (*Hear.*) An Hon. General had alledged that such must be the case with respect to any regulations : this was not the language held in 1793 ; such a reflection would then have been thought a reproach. What ! shall the Catholics of Ireland declare, that they cannot consent to adhere to such a constitution of things as has prevailed in all Catholic countries in Europe ! Such a pretence would be quite idle : they must see that in this, as well as in other countries, there could be nothing inconsistent or unreasonable in the proposed scheme of regulation. Such an argument was, therefore, improvident and injudicious ; and he would defend the Catholics against the imputation that such were their sentiments : if they were, they were much altered since he had the opportunity of knowing them in 1793.

He wished to speak of the Catholic faith in the only part in which it appeared to him to touch upon this subject. In adverting to the tenets of an establishment, great forbearance should be exercised ; every Church had on its records, tenets, of which it in time became ashamed : these, though obsolete, were suffered to remain, because it was frequently a difficult and

unpleasant employment to wipe away the errors of our ancestors. (*Hear.*) The Pastoral of the Pope, which had been so much reprobated, was issued at a time when he was completely stripped of power, and must be considered as an angry effusion uttered in self-defence. He did not pretend to be blind to the danger of the power of the Papal See: it might be rendered formidable as a political instrument, and his opinions might become strong engines of attack to serve particular purposes. He well saw, that not all the might of the Emperor of France was able to depress or destroy the influence of the Pope; and not long since he had an opportunity of seeing the effects of this influence. In the expedition of General Moore, a courier was intercepted, who was conveying to Buonaparte the weekly dispatch of Fouché, the Minister of Police. In this document was explained the state of the public mind; and it was predicted, that Buonaparte would succeed in Spain, if he did not attempt to do violence to the Pope, and through him to the universal Catholic feeling throughout Europe. Attention was paid to this advice, and it was not till after the defeat of Austria that the Pope was humiliated: and now, when difficulties pressed on the Ruler of France, the Pope was released. He did not, therefore, deny that the influence of the Pope was great,—that wielded in conjunction with the resources of the French empire, it might be formidable. The Pope, therefore, became a proper object of constitutional jealousy; but he did not the less feel, on this account, the necessity of entering into this great question, and providing the best remedies against all possible danger. He would not consent to stir a step, unless he was convinced that every step would be secure: but he was convinced that if the Catholics should be suffered to embark in one common cause with common privileges, the nation was strong enough not to suffer by this allowed union in a common interest. Whatever might be the sentiments of the Pope, the conduct of the Catholics had been most zealously friendly to the British Constitution; and he conjured them now to consider, that in the proposed regulations, no other principles, no other modes of action

were adopted, than what were common to all Catholic States in Europe. Even in Spain, the Government had been so jealous of Papal interference, that by an act of State, they extinguished the power of the Pope till it should operate merely for religious, and not for political purposes. All, therefore, that was intended to be offered by way of security, appeared to be the fundamental policy of every state : and the Catholics should remember, that the precedent was drawn from the records of those times when their ancestors laid the foundation of our liberties. (*Hear.*)

"As authorities have been adduced," continued Lord Castlereagh, "to which the house seems inclined to pay every proper attention and deference, it would be a dereliction of the duties which I owe to the character and feelings of Mr. Pitt, as well as to my own feelings and conviction, were I, on the present occasion, interesting as it is, both by the vast importance of the question, and the circumstances under which we are called upon to discuss it, to omit stating the opinions of that great statesman; I must, therefore, with the most undisguised expression, and the most perfect candour, declare that with all the means which I possessed in the full confidence of friendship with Mr. Pitt, I had no reason whatever to suppose, that he did not think the enquiry as proposed to be now instituted into the claims of the Roman Catholics, and the adoption of measures of concession proportionate to the justice of these claims, were not only expedient, wise, and salutary, but fundamentally necessary. I am, at the same time, bound to observe, that he thought the principal objections arising to these concessions, sprang out of the violent and inconsiderate views entertained and expressed by the Roman Catholics themselves. But although these were his sentiments, and to his expression of them, I am at this moment enabled to bear the most unequivocal testimony, I can safely add, that during the whole of my friendly and political intercourse with him, I never could at any one period discover, that the determination of his mind was changed with respect to the proposed concessions to the Roman Catholics, either in the justice or the expediency of the mea-

sure. I have, Sir, taken the liberty to be thus clear and explicit, because my confidence and conviction are strengthened, not only by the means I possessed of knowing his mind and feelings, but because my recollection of his opinions is unimpaired. During the present as on all former discussions, the word 'security' has been used, and used certainly, I admit, with great propriety as far as the true sense of the word respects our establishment in Church and State. If I understand the meaning of the expression, I should not hesitate to call 'security' the adoption of some system, whatever that system may be, which prevailing as it does in every Catholic country, ought not to be denied to a country, Protestant in the establishment of its civil and political rights, Protestant in their progressive state, and Protestant in their present permanence and ultimate prosperity. There is one broad principle, which I can never be induced to abandon, I mean, the guards and provisions necessary to be adopted, in order to meet and counteract the interference of the court of Rome, with regard to its political opinions, and the dissemination of them in a country which does not entertain religious doctrines of a similar nature. This safeguard, although required by the establishments and Governments of Catholic countries themselves, is still more decidedly called for and enforced by the peculiar situation of the Pope, who, being detained by our most inveterate enemy, may be compelled to become the instrument of his perfidious and ambitious views. I should not, in my allusion to the influence of the papal authority, forget to call the attention of the House to the uses and employments to which the different orders of Monks and Friars dependent upon the will of their different principals, may be perverted for the attainment of political ends, in consequence of the commands of these principals, to whom their respective orders and institutions have sworn submission and obedience. Why, let me ask, are the communications from the See of Rome, or from the principals of these religious orders, to be made matters of secrecy? What necessity can there be for concealment? Certainly none,

but in the single point of profession. I am, Sir, now speaking with respect to facts which cannot be contradicted, and with the truth of which every Catholic is acquainted. Where concealment is necessary, I can have no objection to concealment in matters of pure religion and conscientious feeling: but in those common, and as they should be and really are, acts of public intercourse, secrecy and concealment are not only unnecessary, but when exercised, must necessarily become the subject of just distrust and well-founded suspicion. Having, Sir, noticed the nature of the security to which I naturally look in the course of the proceedings which may be adopted in the Committee, I next direct my attention to the *Veto*, which has so frequently become the subject of discussion, both in and out of doors. After all the care I have bestowed upon the consideration of this point, I must confess I am at a loss to find how the Catholics can find it inconsistent, as it has in certain cases been maintained, with the best spirit of their religion, and with the justice of their claims. I have been lately led to believe, and I am now confirmed in the opinion, that this veto affords, not only no satisfaction to the Catholics, but that it is even condemned as a measure which we have no right to require. But, Sir, be this as it may, it becomes my duty to state facts as they have actually occurred, and to assure the House, that this veto was not proposed by myself, or by those with whom I had the honour to act. On the contrary, Sir, I can venture to state that it was formally and explicitly proposed to his Majesty's Ministers by the Roman Catholics themselves. I can also state with the same confidence, that no idea was ever entertained of acquiring patronage in the Catholic Church, on the part of the Government, in consequence of the veto, which was not, as I have observed, the favourite measure of my colleagues or myself, but which, in truth, was first held out as the result of the best wishes and mature deliberations of the Catholics themselves. I will be still more explicit on this head; and I can add, that such was their liberality on the occasion, that they

ran before the wishes, and outstripped the desires of the Government itself. I am therefore authorised in laying down this plain and undeniable principle, that the Roman Catholics, in their avowed character as honest men, have no right to attribute to the Government any idea of acquiring patronage in the Catholic Church, by the exercise of the veto; and that the veto was in reality not suggested by the Government, but was proposed to the consideration, and recommended to the adoption of Ministers by themselves. This principle did not go by any means, or by any possible operation, to sever the Pope from the Catholic Church. It was proposed to learn from their own statements, and their own opinions, the state and condition of the individuals whom they were desirous of placing in the situations which they wished to have properly filled; the proposition came with the more earnestness, from the certain conviction that it was calculated to prevent the revival of jarring jealousies, and the diffusion of animosities and bickerings, prejudicial to the interests and happiness of the community at large. In expressing my wish to go into the Committee, I do it the more sincerely, because I am convinced it is the best and the only way of meeting the wishes of those who are friendly to the Catholics, and of encountering and satisfying the objections of those who are inimical to their claims. I concur in resting this right upon the same principles which I laid down and supported last year. The Right Hon. Gentleman who brought forward this question, in a way certainly which does honour to his candour and abilities, no less than to the cause which he advocates, tells us, that he means to propose in the Committee a general Resolution, as the foundation of the Bill which he intends to propose; and he assures us, that the Bill will be in the strictest conformity to the Resolution. This line of conduct I think perfectly fair, for the Bill must of course be submitted to the Committee, and after having undergone the examination which it may be found to require, it will be then for the House to determine, whether the Bill be fit and proper to be entertained. So far I readily coincide with

the views of the Right Honourable Gentleman; yet I must say with all the candour which the Right Hon. Gent. has a right to expect from me, that the proposed Bill is one, if I understand it as I should, designed to repeal all former acts against the Catholics, with the simple but full recognition of the Established Church. If this be all the provision to be made,—if this be all the safeguard to be set up for the establishment in Church and State, as it actually exists,—I must, Sir, now declare, that this Bill shall have my decided and unqualified opposition; for, anxious as I am to obtain the best possible security for the preservation of the constitution in Church and State, I am bound to maintain, that such a Bill cannot impart any security proportionate to the apprehensions and fears which a measure so very general and undefined must excite. Let me rather speak out plainly, and say, that such a Bill would call into question the very security of the Constitution, as it is at present established in Church and State. I cannot, Sir, consent to a sweeping Bill of Repeals, without the adjustment of precise points,—without the settlement of disputed claims,—without the sanction of those safeguards to which we are bound finally to look, leaving us, should we be so absurd and preposterous as to adopt it, in danger,—if not of impending and sudden ruin, at least exposed to certain and ultimate destruction. It is, therefore, my fixed opinion, that the Right Hon. Gentleman ought to give to the House the whole of the system upon which he means to proceed; and to state in specific terms the means by which he hopes to be enabled to carry it on. I think most seriously, that great danger is likely to arise to the country, from the exclusion in which the Catholics are compelled to live out of the Constitution, and from their consequent connection with and dependence upon a foreign Power; yet the difficulties that are to be overcome in obviating the danger are, no doubt, numerous and considerable. I certainly would not propose that this House, in legislating for the Catholics of Ireland, should go so far as to proceed by way of premunire against their intercourse with a foreign Power; but I would have re-

course to every justifiable mode to render that intercourse, since it is thought indispensably requisite, congenial to the spirit and practice of the Constitution. The Right Hon. and Learned Gentleman (Mr. Plunkett) would agree to some temporary and contingent provisions and conditions suitable to the acceptance and conformity of the Catholics. Surely, Sir, so vague—so indefinite a system, could not be attended with any results satisfactory either to the claims of the Roman Catholics, or to the views of the Protestants most favourable to these claims. What could be the security they would hold out? What ground could the claimants have for their permanence? They might remain altogether, if unaccepted, a dead letter; and if accepted, they might be repealed by any new Parliament. Upon my consideration of the whole of this important question, I am convinced, that the proposition under proper and just regulations may, so far from being dangerous to the Church and State, give great additional security to the Constitution, and impart new strength to the British Empire, in its resources, means, and activity. Under this impression, I shall give my vote for going into the Committee: yet I must say, that Parliament will, notwithstanding, be unprepared immediately to proceed to the final adjustment of all the necessary regulations and guards for the preservation of our happy establishment, whether civilly or religiously considered. There unquestionably does appear to me, at the present moment, an almost insurmountable obstacle, in the state to which the Pope is reduced and in the thralldom to which he is degraded by a perfidious and inveterate enemy; yet I will not presume to maintain, that this obstacle, great as it is, may not be overcome by precautions and provisions, which it will become the duty of the Committee and the House to ascertain and to adopt. I cannot but consider it prudent and wise in the House to take the whole of the case under their grave and mature consideration; their interference and labours must be felt with gratitude, and the consequences may be productive of the most salutary benefits, not to the Catholics only, but to the Constitution of the country.

and to the general interests of the empire. Upon these principles I feel it my duty to go into the Committee, where all the doubts and difficulties connected with the subject will be fairly met and discussed, and where investigation will, in all probability, produce results equally calculated to give satisfaction to the claims of the Catholics, and security to the Constitution in Church and State."

Mr. ROSE assured the House, that if he were convinced any real benefits were like to arise from going into the proposed Committee, no man could be more disposed to assent to that measure than himself. He felt it due, however, to his own feelings and conviction, to observe, as the Noble Lord had mentioned the authority of Mr. Pitt, as having undergone no change of mind with respect to the question before the House; that if the Noble Lord meant to say, that Mr. Pitt was of opinion relief should be extended to the Catholics of Ireland, he agreed with the Noble Lord: but if the Noble Lord meant to say that Mr. Pitt's mind had undergone no change whatever on the subject, and that his opinion was not affected by any new objection, he should beg leave to differ totally with the Noble Lord; for he was convinced, that if Mr. Pitt were at that moment in the House, he would vote against the motion.

Lord CASTLEREAGH explained. He contended that Mr. Pitt had been uniformly consistent in supporting the expediency of the Catholic Claims: and in advocating that sentiment, exclusively of his own individual experience of that great Statesman's opinions, he begged leave to appeal to the causes which had influenced his going out of office. With regard to the particular line of conduct which Mr. Pitt might adopt, were he then present, he would leave it to the House to decide, whether they, the Right Honourable Gentleman, or himself, could be justified in delivering a decided opinion.

Mr. MANNERS SUTTON objected to the sneering way in which the petitions from the Protestants had been treated. Going into a Committee, unless they went into a full deliberation, and came to a pres-

tical decision, would be productive of more evil than benefit: exciting hopes in the Catholics never to be realized, and a ferment in the Protestant minds not readily to be allayed. He denied the justness of the charge of indecency against the Protestant Clergy for the part they had taken. Though they had a right to take part in any question, yet this was not a mere political question, because the very safeguards proposed were for the security of the Protestant Church. It was not for monopoly of power, but because they feared this measure would affect the stability of their Establishment, that they petitioned. He was shocked at the misrepresentation of the Charge of the Bishop of Lincoln, by a Worthy Baronet, who spoke of that Prelate as his respected friend. He hoped he had since read the pamphlet, and altered his opinion, which would otherwise appear most extraordinary. As to Mr. Pitt's authority, whose decease in such times as these he much lamented, he had no new proposition to offer; but with common opportunities of information, he believed that Mr. Pitt was sincere in his object, guarding it with proper securities, but that he did not act upon it, owing to times and circumstances. He thought that if Mr. Pitt were living, he would not have agreed to go into the Committee, unless he knew what was the nature of the measure to be proposed.

Sir R. HERON explained as to what he had said respecting the Bishop of Lincoln, and read passages from the publication, to confirm the opinion he had expressed in a former stage of the debate.

The Hon. F. ROBINSON explained. His objection was to the expressions relative to Clergymen with mitres *on* their heads, and mitres *in* their heads, which he conceived to be a gross calumny.

Mr. MANNERS SUTTON explained.

Mr. PONSONBY animadverted on the critical nicety which had been evinced, and noticed an attack on a prelate as respectable as the Bishop of Lincoln, (the Bishop of Norwich) which had been made from the other side.

Mr. CROKER spoke to order, and said, that all reflexions had been disavowed by Mr. Peele. (*Order.*)

Mr. PONSONBY proceeded. It was always his study to keep within the limits of order, as due to himself, and to the Speaker, and to the House. He extenuated the ardent conduct of the Catholics, who were goaded by the efforts of the press, employed against them, though he would not accuse the Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Peele) of so directing them. The press in Ireland, however, as far as it was in favour of Government, was full of slander and vituperation of the Catholics. As to the Catholic principles being the same now as one hundred and fifty years ago: he knew not what security could be asked, which they did not offer. Security was demanded that the spiritual authority should not encroach upon the temporal concerns; but the Catholics swore that no Pope, nor Priest, nor foreign Potentate, had, or ought to have any temporal power within these realms. Would they believe his oath or not? If not, then the Catholic was dangerous from religion, and monstrous from the infidelity of his oath, not distinguishing between truth and falsehood. Was the Pope to use his power by raising an army, and persuading the Catholics to assist him? or by combining with foreign powers, and debauching the minds of the King's subjects? Was it to be by open force, by conspiracy and cabal, or by treason, or how? Two efforts had been made to get securities. First, the Veto, which had not been quite abjured by the Catholics, and therefore, might possibly be revived. Secondly, domestic nomination, which the Learned Gentleman (Sir W. Scott), with a tender care and jealous anxiety for the consistency of the Catholics, thought quite irreconcilable with their faith, and seemed disposed to convince them, that they could not gratify the House on that subject. When any thing likely to be palatable was proposed, it was stated to be against their religion; and then securities were called for, which it was known to be impossible to give. Mr. P. here read part of the Catholic Prayer book, on the subject of mental reservation and equivocation, to shew the fallacy of the charges made

against the Catholics on those subjects. He contrasted the fabrications against the Catholics with those imputed to them. He did not think the diversity of opinions respecting Mr. Pitt's sentiments very complimentary to that Right Hon. Gentleman, who, he believed, thought this measure wise and prudent. It was said the question must not be forced; certainly not, but much good had been done by the repeated discussions, and he believed that the majority of the persons of education and property in this country were favorable to the examination of it by the wisdom of Parliament, whose decision in its favor would give them great satisfaction. Had he lived at the Revolution, he should have voted for many strict enactments, thinking the Catholics at that time unfriendly to liberty; though now we ought to recollect, that the fury of puritanical laws had left them no refuge, but in the arms of the Crown. If restored to their former rights, they never could look back to the period of that restoration, without recognizing it as the work of the popular branch of the Legislature: they must owe it to the Constitution. How could they be disposed to betray that which restored to them their liberties and privileges? Now Protestants aided them in their petitions: if they manifested a disposition contrary to liberty would that be the case? Would not a Protestant majority be able to re-enact their disabilities? Suppose, not all that was asked, but that something gracious were done in a Committee, was it to be maintained that it would render the Catholics more discontented? What authority had Gentlemen for saying so? That they would apply to Parliament again was a matter he would not dispute. It was not in human nature that they should not do so, while the doors of Parliament were open, and they laboured under disqualifications. If in the Committee, Parliament shewed a conciliatory disposition, they would confer as great a benefit on the empire as it had received for ages past. Often as the Catholics had importuned them, they had never yet received this favour at their hands. It would of itself be a prodigious advance in the cause. He

hoped that all who voted for the Committee would do so, in the same spirit expressed by the Noble Lord, namely, to find out something satisfactory: he beseeched those who had other views, to vote against the Committee, as infinitely better, and more manly; not raising hopes, and then sinking them in cruel disappointment. One great object of a Committee was to hear what every Gentleman had to propose on this subject, and it was the only Parliamentary mode of proceeding. As soon as the House should shew a sincere disposition to grant to the Catholics all that could be granted, consistently with the security of the State and established Church, then he conceived it would be the duty of the Catholics to give up for conciliation, every thing which they could fairly give up consistently with their faith and their religion. He had told the Noble Lord last year in the case of America, that if she would not accept of the conciliatory measures offered by this country, he should support Ministers in the war, and he had kept his word. He should now assure him, that if the Ministers should fairly do all that was reasonable to conciliate the Catholics, and they should reject the boon, he would support Ministers, even if that support should exclude him from power for his life, and establish the Noble Lord (Lord Castlereagh) in it. He could make the same declaration for all his friends who sat about them. He well knew their honourable minds, and that they only valued power as a means of rendering service to the country.

[After Mr. Ponsonby had sat down, several Members rose, but the House loudly calling on Mr. Canning, the other Gentlemen gave way to him.]

Mr. CANNING said, that being called upon in the manner he had been by the Right Honourable and Learned Gentleman (Sir Wm. Scott), and rebuked by him for having continued so long silent, he thought that it might appear necessary to make an explanation to the House on that point. He should have thought that he rather owed an apology to the House for now speaking, before he had heard the sentiments of many

other Gentlemen, who were probably inclined to speak, than for delaying so long to give his opinion. On many other great questions which were agitated in that House, it was often doubtful on which side the burthen of the proof rested ; but on the present occasion he thought there could be no such doubt. The burthen of proof must clearly rest on those who meant to contend, that the House should not redeem the pledge which they had given last year. In a case of such great importance when we stood committed to the Catholics for measures of conciliation, and to the Protestants for security, he would not say, that it was impossible that reasons might not have occurred to shew the House, that the course they were about to adopt was likely to be prejudicial ; but until such reasons were produced, the presumption must be, that the course which the House had last year resolved on by a great majority was the proper one to pursue. Thinking that the present motion arose out of and might be considered the child of the resolution which the House had come to last year upon his motion, he did not think that he had been bound upon the present occasion to bring forward any reasons to induce the House to confirm its own act. He had waited for the objections of other Gentlemen, to avoid trespassing upon the House with a repetition of the arguments which he had before urged. He was not unaware that this was a new Parliament, and therefore could not be said in strictness to be bound to redeem any pledges given by a former Parliament ; but when great and important national objects were the subject of discussion, it was usual to take a higher strain of morality, and not to confine oneself to mere technical distinctions. The House had certainly the power to depart from the pledge of the last Parliament, but he thought that they would not satisfy themselves by making it a mere question of power. It was in the recollection of every body, that upon a former occasion, it was held that the dissolution of Parliament did not abate an impeachment instituted by the House of Commons. It would appear some-

what strange to the country, if the doctrine held out to them, was, that all that was harsh and accusatorial in their powers were to continue after a dissolution, but that every thing of a milder and more agreeable nature was entirely taken away by a dissolution. In the consideration of the question, one could not forget the condition of the Government, divided as they are among themselves upon the subject. It was, however, sufficiently well known, that a great preponderance of opinion, in the present Government, was adverse to the discussion of the Catholic Claims, and therefore, it was of fearful consequence to the country, that it should be supposed that Government could at any time interpose a dissolution between a pledge of that House, and its accomplishment, for the purpose of getting rid of the pledge. He conceived himself to be fully as responsible on the present occasion, as the Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Gratian) who had brought forward the motion. He had most willingly surrendered to the Right Hon. Gentleman, the task of raising a superstructure on the foundation which he had laid in the last Session. He had surrendered it to him with all the reverence which his great talents demanded, and with all the confidence which his moderation had so fully justified. From the moderation and temper which that Right Hon. Gentleman always displayed, the Catholic cause had gained great advantages. To another Hon. and Learned Gentleman who sat near him, (Mr. Plunkett,) he thought it unnecessary to add his feeble testimony to the general marks of approbation with which his speech had been received by the House. In that admirable speech the Honourable and Learned Gentleman had not only displayed the talents of an accomplished orator, but had shown throughout, the profound views and comprehensive mind of a great Statesman. To his mind, however, it appeared that the principal excellence of it was, his utterly disclaiming and rejecting that meretricious popularity to which so many aspire. This enabled him to rebuke the excesses of those whose cause he was so powerfully advocating; and it taught the Catholics, that while they might look with con-

fidence to him as their friend,—while they conducted themselves with temper and moderation; yet that he would be as ready as any man to join in repressing their excesses. This moderation had already disposed many Members to think more favourably of the Catholic claims, and he thought the impression would be carried into the Committee. Those who objected to the present motion, might, as he thought, be divided into three classes. The first were those who had concurred in the vote he had the honour to propose, and yet now saw reasons for opposing the present motion. Of this class, or to speak more accurately of *him* (*a loud laugh*) (Mr. C. alluded to Mr. Banks), he must say, that he stood phoenix-like, alone and unmolested. The second class were those who were not bound by the pledge given by the last Parliament. Of those he should say, generally, that their reasons ought to be received with some qualifications. Although they might not be bound by the decision of last Parliament, yet it could not be supposed that they were the best acquainted with the subject, or the best qualified to give advice upon it. The last class he might divide into two: those whose objection rested on circumstances that were transitory and temporary; and those that could not conceive that in any times, or under any circumstances, the claims of the Catholics ought to be allowed. As to the first class (Mr. Banks,) for whose opinions, when they agreed with his own, he felt the most unfeigned respect, (*a laugh*) his objection to going into a Committee was the apprehended disappointment of expectation to the Catholic mind, and want of realization of the hopes of the Protestants. He might assume in confirmation of his argument, that the Catholic mind was now much agitated, and that the Protestant mind was still in a great degree of irritation. That this was the case their best friends sincerely lamented and deplored. But when he admitted this, and when he supposed all figures of speech to be exhausted in describing such a state of things, he would then ask the Honourable Gentleman, did he wish that such a thing should continue, and did it not become our more imperious duty to find a

remedy for such evils? (*Hear, hear.*) The angry temper which the Catholics now evince, had been attributed by many, and with some justice, to the influence of persons who were not sincerely their friends, but who, to serve the purposes of their own personal ambition, wished to raise a storm, by means of which those individuals, Protestants as well as Catholics, hoped to be able to gratify their private views. If this were a true representation, it was evident, that in the present state of things, those individuals were capable of inflicting very serious injuries on the Catholics at large, which it was the duty of the House to save them from. (*Hear, hear.*) He would wish to rescue the Catholic from his misleader, and the Protestant from the exaggerator of danger to his church. Whatever indignation the House might feel against those who were the authors of this mutual irritation, he thought they could not better consult their dignity, than by acting in the way that the Ruler of the ocean was beautifully described by the poet, when the seas were disturbed without his consent. His indignation was thus expressed :—

“ Quos Ego—sed motos præstat componere fluctus.”

This was the course he thought the most advisable on the present occasion. The Hon. Gentleman, (Mr. Banks) had now brought forward arguments which had not prevented him last year from voting for his motion. As to the Catholics not amalgamating with the Protestants, nor encouraging intermarriages with them; this was no new charge against them, and yet he had not charged him last year with a measure that went to check the instinct of nature, and stop the propagation of mankind. (*A laugh.*) If the Hon. Gentleman had considered this point a little more, he would have found that it was the Protestants who had by very severe laws (which were repealed but lately) endeavoured to prevent all such intermarriages. Heavy penalties were imposed upon the Catholic priest who should celebrate such a marriage; the non-conforming husband was at the mercy of a conforming wife; and a son just come from the nursery might, by turning Protestant, secure the inheritance of his father's lands.

and make him a mere tenant for life. While such laws prevailed, it was not wonderful if the Catholics also objected to those intermarriages. The second class of objectors were those who thought, that if it were not for some temporary causes and circumstances, the claims might be conceded. His Right Hon. friend (Mr. Yorke) had mentioned some of those circumstances which might induce him to vote for it. The first was supposing Buonaparte were to die. On this circumstance observations had been already made, that it was not necessary for him to repeat. The next circumstance that would make him favourable was, if there should be no more tumultuous meetings, no more irritation or angry feeling on any side. When desire of relief was extinguished, and hope had sickened and died, then in his new *millenium*, his Right Honourable friend would come forward to grant that which was no longer desirable or sought for. (*Laughter.*) When all jealousy between Protestant and Catholic was extinct,—when all sects and parties were in perfect harmony, and lay down together like the leopard and the kid (*a laugh*),—then he would come with his healing hand to cure those disorders which were felt no longer. (*Laughing.*) The other condition on which he was disposed to relieve them was, in fact, if they should cease to be Catholics. Now, although the good-will of his Right Honourable Friend must be of great value to any body of men, those conditions appeared too high a price for it. The Right Honourable Gentleman then adverted at some length to the observations of a Right Honourable and Learned Friend, (Mr. Bathurst) and concluded his observations on this point by saying, that while the establishment was a tender plant, and had not grown to maturity, it might require more care in fencing and protecting than was necessary now, when it had struck its roots so deep, and with its branches over-canopied the land. A great change had certainly taken place in the circumstances of the country, which justified a change of policy. Another Right Honourable and Learned Friend of his (Sir William Scott) had confessed, that even now there were some things in the

penal code which might perhaps be at present unnecessary, and ought to be repealed. The Noble Lord (Lord Castlereagh) and other Members had been apprehensive, that going into a Committee would only be productive of disappointment; but the disappointment must be done away by finding that their cause had gained so distinguished a convert, (*a laugh*), who would, undoubtedly, when they came into the Committee, propose every relaxation which he should conceive possible. No doubt that learned body, of whom he was both the representative and the ornament, would feel great pleasure when he informed them of the course he intended to take. He ridiculed the idea of the Catholics not being bound by oath; nothing could in his mind be more preposterous or more unjust. "Time was, that when the brains were out, the man would die, and there an end;" but in this case some persons would have them believe, that though the Catholic swears to support the Government, he should not be entitled to credence; and that when he falls bravely fighting the battles of his country; and defending its best and dearest interests, he in reality meant to subvert and overturn its Constitution. He deprecated certain writings and publications which had been issued on both sides of the question, and lamented the effects which they had each of them produced. In doing this the Right Hon. Gentleman adverted particularly to a pamphlet, entitled "Letters on the State of Ireland;" in which he said many things were advanced that were contrary to every principle of legitimate belief. He read a passage from one of them, which asserted, "that the principles of the Catholics were really now the same as they had ever been before; and that if they were possessed of the power to effect it, the Protestants would be liable and subject to the same fate as the Danes had once experienced in this country." In another passage of the same publication, there was an account of a Roman Catholic clergyman going into the cabin of one of his parishioners, where he found a New Testament, which he snatched up with the highest indignation, threw on the floor, and rampled under his heel with every mark of abhorrence

and contempt. This gentle and moderate author, on the subject of Catholic principles, wrote at Cork, but dated at Kilkenny; and by way of adding greater lustre to the credibility of his work, he modestly signed himself *Anonymous*. This kind of mischievous fabrication had not only been resorted to at Kilkenny, but at Limerick also; and nothing, he thought, could shew the cause they attempted to advocate in more weak or contemptible colours. To have done, however, with such trash, he would only ask, if such wretched statements were to be listened to, could it ever be expected the country would have the slightest chance of being tranquillised on this most important subject? Notwithstanding the variety of petitions which had appeared as coming from the Clergy of this country, he could not but acquit them as a body, of being actually concerned in such uncandid and partial proceedings. He would, however, desire those who did resort to such means, to consider the high and 'vantage ground on which they stood—to reflect that the glorious Constitution of this country was a system of checks of one part against the other; and that it most particularly behoved them to forbear from using the mean and sordid channel of misrepresentation as beneath the dignity and respectability of the sacred character they held in the community to which they belonged. He then read a part of a letter from a Clergyman against the statement published by Mr. Butler, respecting the situation of the Catholics, in which the Rev. Gentleman accuses Mr. Butler of being guilty of the *suppressio veri* to a degree that was in the Rev. writer's opinion equal to the *suggestio falsi*. Mr. Butler, it seemed, had commenced his statement by saying that a Majority of the last Parliament had given a pledge to take the claims of the Catholics into consideration; whereas though the resolutions were carried in the Commons, they were rejected in the Lords. The fact was, however, that the *suppressio veri* amounted to this; the majority in the Commons was 169, which was one of the largest that had almost ever taken place in that House on the same subject; and the approach to the *suggestio falsi* was, that it was

rejected in the Lords by a majority of one single vote. He thought it necessary to take notice of these instances, not as marks of the general opinion of the Church but as prejudices he would wish to have done away. He rejected also the idea that the Clergy of the Established Church had been induced to urge their arguments from motives of self-interest; but he could not shut his eyes so close as not to see, that when they permitted their passions to take possession of them, they became blind to the variety of checks which the Constitution contained for its own preservation, and suffered themselves to be led away by a warmth of zeal which their sacred functions did not require, and which the religion they professed by no means stood in need of. His Right Honourable and Learned Friend had adverted to and defended the Petition of the Refugees, and had also noticed some former speeches of his (Mr. Canning) relative to the Edict of Nantz. With respect to the petition of the refugees, he (Mr. Canning) thought it might have been well spared; they had certainly no occasion to interfere on the subject, and he would put it to the House—What did France gain by the Edict of Nantz? The loss of many thousands of her most valuable mechanics and artizans, who brought over with them every thing that could tend to enrich this country, except their prejudices. He then alluded to the recent and singular case of the Lord Mayor of Dublin having appeared at the Bar of that House, and of his having claimed the same privileges which were enjoyed by the Sheriffs of London. What glorious victory did he come to proclaim? What splendid achievement did he come to notify? He brought a petition from the Corporation of Dublin against the claims of their Catholic brethren. His Lordship, however, did not come entirely single handed: he brought over with him another petition against a monopoly of the East India Company. Down with the monopoly of trade, said he, but keep up that of religion against the poor Catholics. In his right hand, he brought a petition, praying the House to deny every claim of the Catholics to its indulgence; and in his left he bore another, im-

ploring them to admit the great city from whence he came to all the benefits of the East-India trade. He was at a loss to conceive with what countenance the orators of that assembly could, at the same time, advance such opposite claims. He should not be surprised if, in a little time hence, they should object to the Catholics being allowed any participation in the East India trade, and that office should henceforth be the China of the Constitution. The object of the present motion was to fulfil the pledge of the last Parliament, by going into a Committee. The objection to it was so futile as not to require an answer. The intention of going into a Committee was only to form a ground-work for further proceedings. Those who wished to go into a Committee, had been taunted by being asked whether they were all agreed on the measures to be adopted? He understood the Right Hon. Gentleman who brought forward the motion, meant to propose that they should remove the disabilities under which the Catholics laboured, so far as could be done without danger to the Protestant establishment, and against such a measure he could see no possible objection.

The Right Hon. Gentleman then urged a variety of general arguments in favour of going into the Committee, with a farther view to conciliate the Catholics, and to grant them not all they asked, nor to legislate so much for their good as for the general benefit of the State. It had been said that England was already excommunicated by the Pope : what disadvantage had she thereby suffered? That the Pope would urge Buonaparte to pursue every measure of warfare against us? In God's name, what offensive measure was there which he did not already pursue? It had been asked, would you suffer the Catholics to regulate the Protestants in ecclesiastical matters? Certainly not; and this was one of the qualifications which he should expect to find in the Bill to be proposed. Would you give them the custody of the Great Seal, and thereby make them keepers of the King's Conscience? No. On the subject of foreign influence and correspondence, he asked if they

did not exist now : and would it not be better that they should be carried on, as they then would be, openly, than as they now were, secretly ? He did not affect to think lightly of the dangers of the grant, and respected the honest prejudices of the Protestants but Gentlemen had no right to set to the account of the grant both the present evils and the prospective too : it was a comparison of danger between the present restrictions and the prospective emancipation ; and he was only anxious to carry the torch of discussion into the most remote parts of this haunted House, and see the phantoms of danger vanish before it. The present question was, as to the principle, not the detail. (*Question, question ! Hear, hear !*) He was anxious that the measure at large should be before the country, something that they might see, feel, touch, and handle ; and not something of which they formed a conception, either from the exaggeration of their own fears, or from the heart-sickening temper of deferred hope. He therefore thought that something between the propositions of the Right Hon. and Learned Gentleman, and the Noble Lord, would best meet the case. He proposed that the Committee should prepare a Bill, which should go to a second reading, filled up *pro forma*, and then lie open till another Session for revisal before it should be carried into a law. The name of Mr. Pitt had been introduced by an Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Tomline) who spoke early in the debate, and who was in every way entitled to the courtesy of the House : he commenced his most extraordinary, “ and, I think (said Mr. Canning) his—I will say nothing more than extraordinary (*a laugh !*) speech, by an intimation of the inferred opinions of Mr. Pitt upon this subject ;” which Mr. Canning, with no unfriendly voice, told him, he had better have omitted, since, in point of reasoning, the House were equally competent to judge : and in point of authority, there were many circumstances at the present time, which did not concur in Mr. Pitt’s days ; there was one particularly of a temporary nature, which had not ceased when Mr. Pitt was taken away from us. But many who were now resent heard that great Statesman on the 25th of March,

1805, utter such sentiments as these: "I thought that such concessions to his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects might have been granted to them under such guards and securities as would entirely remove all danger to the Protestant establishment, which might have been a boon to the former, - innocent to the latter, - and conducive to the strength, unanimity, and prosperity of the whole empire. I therefore, saw no rational objection to Catholic emancipation." These words now sounded in the ears of the Right Honourable Gentleman. But then it was said, that Mr. Pitt had not communicated his opinion to Lord Eldon. The syllogism ran thus: Every great and fundamental opinion must be communicated to the Lord Chancellor: Mr. Pitt did not so communicate this great and fundamental opinion: *ergo*, Mr. Pitt never entertained it. (*A Laugh.*) Of the petitions, some prayed that the emancipation might be not unconditional: so Mr. Canning advised. Some desired the House to take the question into its consideration: Mr. Canning's vote for going into a committee would comply with those. Some prayed the House to consider the question with a view of hostility: the House must go into a committee, even for that purpose. But the great mass of the people had not petitioned either way, the whole of the Scotch Presbytery, with Glasgow in particular, who made it a part of King William's oath, that he should exterminate the Catholics.

Mr. BRAGGE BATHURST rose to explain, amidst the most overwhelming clamours for *question*, inasmuch that

Mr. Secretary RYDER moved an adjournment, which was seconded, and put by the Speaker; but the sense of the house being to *go on*,

Mr. PONSONBY trusted, that as there remained but few members who were anxious to speak, the House would not defeat its own ends by refusing to hear.

Mr. BATHURST then proceeded in explanation, but was repeatedly interrupted by the impatience of the House.

Mr. GRATTAN briefly replied, that the Gentlemen on the other side, had gone into the articles of

the projected Bill prematurely, because they could make objections to them, which they could not find in its principles. As to the argument, that to admit Catholics into Parliament would be to repeal the Bill of Rights, he quoted the Scotch and Irish Acts of Union, which expressly declared that the Sovereign's oath to that effect should be taken "until Parliament should otherwise direct;" it was therefore provisional, and not fundamental.

The House then divided—

For Mr. GRATTAN'S Motion	264
Against it	224

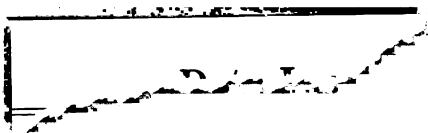
MAJORITY IN FAVOUR OF THE MOTION, FORTY.

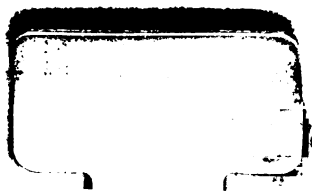
THE END.

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